

A COMPARISON of EFL TEACHERS' and STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
of LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS and TEACHERS'
REPORTED CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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To my family...

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON of EFL TEACHERS' and STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS of
LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS and TEACHERS' REPORTED
CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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This study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of university level students' listening comprehension problems, who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in order to compare them with the students' perceptions, as well as to probe into teachers' reported classroom practices to deal with these listening comprehension problems. With this aim, the study was carried out with 423 B1.2 level EFL learners and 49 teachers in Turkey.

First, the participating teachers were asked to list B1.2 level students' listening comprehension problems, and then both teachers and students were given a 30-item questionnaire with 5 sub-categories related listening comprehension problems: message, task, speaker, listener and strategy use. In addition, 12 teachers, who were chosen by considering the results of the quantitative data, were interviewed in order to explore how teachers help their students to overcome their listening comprehension problems.

The results of the quantitative data revealed that several items in each sub-category of the questionnaire showed statistically significant differences. Except for one item, teachers' mean scores were always higher than students' mean scores, which indicate that students do not experience these listening comprehension problems as frequently as their teachers think and teachers may be more aware of these listening comprehension problems than their students. The analysis of the interviews revealed that, all of the participating teachers considered listening as a very important skill for their students. In addition, it is found that although teachers have different perceptions among themselves and have different years of experiences, when their reported classroom practices are considered, they perform similarly in the classroom in order to help their students to overcome their listening comprehension problems.

Key words: listening comprehension problems, students' perceptions, teachers' perceptions, teachers' classroom practices

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN DİNLEME-ANLAMA
PROBLEMLERİ ALGILARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI VE ÖĞRETMENLERİN
SINIF İÇİ UYGULAMALARI

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Bu çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen üniversite düzeyindeki öğrencilerin dinleme-anlama problemleri hakkında öğretmen ve öğrenci algılarını karşılaştırmayı, bununla beraber öğretmenlerin bu problemleri çözmek için sınıfta neler yaptıklarını öğrenmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda bu çalışma, Türkiye’de, yabancı dil seviyeleri B1.2 olan 423 öğrenci ve 12 öğretmen ile birlikte yürütülmüştür.

Öncelikle, katılımcı öğretmenlerin, B1.2 seviyesindeki öğrencilerin dinleme-anlama problemlerini listelemeleri istenmiştir. Daha sonra öğretmen ve öğrencilere 30 maddeden oluşan, anlam, görev, konuşmacı, dinleyici ve strateji kullanımıyla ilgili olmak üzere beş alt kategori içeren bir anket verilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, nicel veri analizlerin sonuçları göz önünde bulundurularak seçilen 12 öğretmen ile dinleme-anlama problemlerinin üstesinden gelmek için öğrencilerine nasıl yardımcı olduklarını öğrenmek amacıyla mülakat yapılmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, nicel veri analizleri anketin her alt kategorisindeki birçok madde için istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark göstermiştir. Bir madde dışında,

öğretmenler öğrencilerden daha yüksek ortalamalara sahiptirler ki bu durum, öğrencilerin belirtilen maddelerdeki problemleri öğretmenlerinin düşündüğü kadar sık yaşamadıklarını ve öğretmenlerin bu problemlerin farkında olduklarını göstermektedir. Mülakat analizleri sonucunda öğretmenlerin dinleme becerisini öğrencileri için çok önemli olduğunu düşündükleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna ek olarak, öğretmenlerin farklı algılara ve farklı yıllarda deneyimlere sahip olmalarına rağmen, sınıf içi uygulamaları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, öğrencilerinin dinleme problemlerine yardımcı olmak amacıyla sınıfta benzer şekilde davrandıkları bulunmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Dinleme-anlama problemleri, öğretmenlerin algısı, öğrencilerin algısı, öğretmenlerin sınıf içi uygulamaları

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Being able to use all the basic language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, effectively is very important in order to be accepted as a competent language learner. Around the world, teaching English for communication has become an important goal of the foreign language teachers. In order to have an effective communication, language learners need to be taught to speak the language with some fluency. However, if the utterances are not comprehended by the listener, which makes listening a crucial skill for language learners, only speaking itself cannot be accepted as communication (Rivers, 1981).

Listening, which is one of the most difficult skills to acquire, has generally been neglected by teachers because of giving more emphasis on other skills. With the given focus on the communication in language learning process, listening has gained importance since it is an important element of communication. In addition, since English has been widely used around the world as a second or foreign language; language learners now have the chance of being exposed to the language in various situations, from entertainment to academic purposes. In order to survive especially in academic contexts, learners need to be able to listen effectively for various reasons such as to follow the lectures or to study abroad. With the help of technology, teachers now have many opportunities to improve learners' listening comprehension skill in the classroom. Listening materials used in the classroom are generally prepared by considering the proficiency level of the students, and the teachers are the main source of input that the learners hear regularly. In addition, when English is taught as a foreign language, learners have limited exposure to the target language in

their daily life which results in lack of practice. That is why learners generally have no problems understanding their teachers and following the activities in the book. However, since the utterances that learners hear in real life communication situations may differ listening is a problematic skill for many language learners.

Many studies have been conducted on listening comprehension in order to help learners improve their listening skill. These studies focused on factors affecting listening comprehension, importance of pronunciation training, strategies used by learners, effects of strategy training on listening comprehension, listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles. However, among the perception studies about listening comprehension, the focus has been on the learners' side of the picture. Therefore, this study aims to investigate learners' listening comprehension problems by taking into consideration both learners' and teachers' perceptions as well as teachers' reported ways of dealing with those problems.

Background of the Study

With the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the late 1970s, teaching English for communication has become an important goal for most foreign language teachers around the world (Rivers, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Especially since the second International Association Applied Linguistics (AILA) conference held in 1969, there were many changes in the field of second/foreign language education, one of which is the rising importance of listening comprehension (Morley, 2001).

The International Listening Association (ILA) defines listening as “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages” (1996). Although listening comprehension is “an active process

in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge” (Fang, 2008, p. 22), it is often regarded as a passive skill which is a misconception since listening requires listeners’ involvement as a receptive skill (Lindsay & Knight, 2006; Littlewood, 1981).

In the 1970’s, after having been neglected for a long time, listening began to receive the attention it deserved and started to be recognized as a fundamental skill (Morley, 2001). As Richards (2005) states “the status of listening in language programs has undergone substantial change in recent years. From being a neglected skill relegated to passing treatment as a minor strand within a speaking course it now appears as a core course in many language programs” (p. 85). Similarly, Vandergrift (2007) suggests that listening is accepted as the heart of the language. According to Buck (2000) listening is a complicated and multidimensional process. Several theorists have taken different views to describe it in terms of sub-skills (e.g., Richards, 1983; Weir, 1993). Top-down and bottom-up processes are the most commonly mentioned theories in the literature. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) define the top down model as “the use of previous knowledge in processing a text rather than relying upon the individual sounds and words” (p. 25). Getting the gist, recognizing the topic, identifying the speaker, finding the main idea, finding supporting details, and making inferences are some of the examples of top-down skills (Brown, 2001; Peterson, 1991). On the other hand, in the bottom up model, listeners improve their listening by starting with the smallest unit of the message such as phonemes and combine them to words in order to form phrases (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). Discriminating between phonemes, listening for word endings, recognizing syllable patterns, recognizing words when they are linked together in

streams of speech, using features of stress, intonation and prominence to help identify important information can be given as examples of bottom-up skills (Brown, 2001; Peterson, 1991).

With the increased importance attached to listening skills in language learning, teaching listening and listening comprehension have caught the attention of many researchers (e.g., Brown, 2008; Dunkel, 1991; Goh, 2002; Guo 2007; Ma, 2009). There are some studies which have focused specifically on learners' listening comprehension problems (e.g., Butt, M. N., Sharif, M. M., Naseer-ud-Din, M., Hussain, I., Khan, F., & Ayesha, U, 2010; Goh, 2000; Graham, 2006; Hasan, 2000; Yousif, 2006). However, researchers have focused on the listening comprehension problems only from the learners' perspective. To the knowledge of the researcher of this study there have not been any studies that compare learners' and teachers' views of learners' listening comprehension problems and explores the relationships between these perceptions and the teachers' actual classroom practices. The teachers' opinions are of paramount importance since the differences between learners' and teachers' perceptions and teachers' classroom practices can affect the success of the learners.

Statement of the Problem

Of all the four main language skills, listening is the one that has been neglected for a long time. It took the attention of the researchers after its importance in communication had been understood in language teaching (Morley, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007). There have been various studies conducted on how to develop learners' listening comprehension (e.g., Kalidova, 1981; Vandergrift, 2007) as well as, the listening strategies used by the learners (e.g., Goh 2002). One of the other

subjects that took the attention of the researchers is learners' listening comprehension problems (e.g., Demirkol, 2009; Goh, 2000; Graham, 2006; Hasan, 2000; Yousif, 2006). However, studies that focused on learner's listening comprehension problems explored only learners' perceptions of the challenges they faced in listening. To the knowledge of the researcher, there has not been any study that looked at the learners' listening comprehension problems from both learners' and teachers' points of views. This study will look at both learners' and teachers' views about learners' listening comprehension problems in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In addition, it will look at teachers' reported ways of dealing with those problems.

In the countries where English is taught as a foreign language, learners have more limited access to oral English outside of the classroom than learners in second language contexts, which means limited opportunity to practice communicative skills. In order not to experience miscommunication, it is important to understand what the speaker says while having a conversation. Like many learners around the world, listening is a problematic skill to acquire for learners in Turkey although they start to learn English at a relatively early age. Because of giving more emphasis on teaching grammar, skills like speaking and listening, which are the important parts of communication, generally stay in the background. As a result many learners at university level still have listening comprehension problems which affect their communication ability. Knowing the issues that prevent learners from comprehending oral messages is very important to help them be better listeners. In order to help learners overcome those problems, there is a need to first clearly identify these problems by consulting both learners and teachers.

Research Questions

- 1) What are university level EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems?
- 2) What are the teachers' reported practices of dealing with these perceived problems?

Significance of the Study

Although many studies have been conducted on learners' listening comprehension skills, these have tended to focus on learners' perceptions or on combining listening with strategy use and strategy training on listening comprehension, or on learners' perceptual learning styles. However, to the knowledge of the researcher, the previous studies focused on learners' listening comprehension problems were interested in only learners' perspectives. This study, which intends to look at learners' perceptions in a comparative manner with the ideas of their instructors may contribute to the existing literature by showing teachers' perspectives of learners' listening comprehension problems.

At the local level, in Turkey, due to the fact that the exams in the current education system, including language tests that students take in school or high stake exams such as university entrance exam for foreign language departments, are highly grammar-based, learners are not encouraged and motivated to improve their communication skills, which makes listening skills often problematic at the university level. The result of this study may be of benefit to both learners and teachers. Identifying students' listening comprehension problems can help teachers to find solutions in order to be a better guide for their students.

Teachers have an important role in helping learners during this process, getting teachers' views on learners' listening comprehension problems are very important. In addition, since there is a link between teachers' classroom practices and students' academic achievement, it is important to investigate how teachers try to help their students to overcome their listening comprehension problems. Comparing learners' and teachers' opinions on learners' listening comprehension problems will help teachers to see whether there is a mismatch between learners' needs and teachers' understandings of the listening comprehension problems. Thus, teachers can be more helpful to their learners in the process of dealing with listening comprehension problems by preparing supporting materials or adapting the listening activities in their book according to learners' needs and expectations.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the background of the present study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and the significance of the study. In the next chapter, the review of the previous literature on listening comprehension will be introduced. In the third chapter, the methodology of the study will be described. In the fourth chapter, data analysis and results will be presented. In the fifth chapter, the results will be discussed, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and review the literature related to this study examining students' listening comprehension problems as perceived by the students and the teachers while investigating teachers' reported practices. The first section explores the history of listening in English Language Teaching (ELT), the definition of the listening skill, its importance and the way it differs from hearing. In the second section, the emphasis of teaching listening and the listening process will be covered while the last section presents the possible listening comprehension problems and a discussion of current research conducted on students' listening comprehension problems.

History of Listening in ELT

Listening was not taught in language classrooms for a long time until late 1960s since it was ignored and the emphasis was on grammar. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), language teachers and researchers paid more attention to reading and grammatical skills and teaching listening was not accepted as a significant feature of language teaching. As Field (2008) indicates, "In the early days of English Language Teaching (ELT), listening chiefly served as a means of introducing new grammar through model dialogues" (p. 13).

As far as the methods and approaches which have appeared throughout the years are concerned, each of them dealt with language learning in various ways and placed listening differently. The first method in ELT was Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which viewed learning a language as sets of rules. This method aimed to help students read and understand the literary works in a foreign language

and help them grow intellectually. In addition, it is thought that students probably would not need to use the target language, but it would be beneficial to learn it through mental exercises. In GTM, teaching listening was never the concern because students were learning the languages that they would not have the chance of listening. The main purpose of learning languages was to be able to read and translate its literature. In addition, teachers did not have any training in teaching listening (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). As Flowerdew and Miller (2005) state, “The only listening that students would have to do would be to listen to a description of the rules of the second language (L2) in the first language (L1)” (p. 4).

Through the end of nineteenth century, the Direct Method (DM), which was referred as “natural” method, became popular as an alternative method to GTM which did not give importance to the use of foreign language to communicate. Supporters of the DM had the idea that the best way to learn a foreign language was the natural development of language. For this purpose, an aural/oral system of teaching was suitable, and teachers and students were expected to use L2 in the classroom. The Direct Method concentrated on teaching listening skill before the other language skills; however, although L2 was used in the classroom, there was no effort to develop listening strategies or to teach listening (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

These methods were followed by many other teaching methods which provided suggestions for how to teach foreign languages by showing the best way to enable students to communicate in the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). During those years, there had been many changes in the theories and practices of

language teaching. Especially after the second International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) Conference in 1969, very important ideas appeared in second and foreign language teaching:

1. individual learners and individuality of learning;
2. listening and reading as nonpassive and very complex receptive processes;
3. listening comprehension is being recognized as a fundamental skill;
4. real language used for real communication as a viable classroom model.

(Morley, 2001, p. 69)

Of all the four main language skills, listening was the most influenced one by those trends. In the 1970s, listening, with more importance it has gained as a skill, started to take place in educational programs besides speaking, reading and writing. In particular, with the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the late 1970s, teaching English for communication began to play a significant role all over the world. In the 1990s, with the increased attention to listening, aural comprehension had a significant place in second and foreign language learning (Morley, 2001; Rivers, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Since then, there has been a great interest in listening among researchers (e.g., Field, 1998; Rost, 2002; Vandergrift, 1999; Vandergrift, 2007).

Listening and Hearing

Since listening has an important place in our daily lives and in education, it would be better to clear the ambiguity between hearing and listening. Kline (1996) states that being aware of the difference between hearing and listening is an important feature for listening effectively. He describes them as “Hearing is the reception of sound, listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active” (p. 7). Although hearing and listening are used as equivalent, Rost (2002) states the difference between them as “hearing is a form of perception. Listening is an active and intentional process. Although both hearing and listening involve sound perception, the difference in terms reflects a degree of intention” (p. 8). According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005), all children are born with the ability to hear which is a naturally developed process. Children first listen and then start to speak. They speak before they read and writing comes after reading. That is, among all the other language skills, listening is the first one to appear (Lundsteen, 1979). Similarly, Flowerdew and Miller (2005) state that people start to hear before they are born and a child develops the ability of discriminating the things that she/he hears and listening process during the first year and with cognitive development listening ability improves.

Over the years, listening has been defined in various ways by educators in social sciences depending on their area of expertise (Rost, 2002). In the 1900s, because of the improvements in the recording technology, since acoustic phonetics was very important, listening was defined “in terms of reliably recording acoustic signals in the brain” (p. 1). In the 1920s and 1930s, with more information obtained about the human brain, listening was defined as an “unconscious process controlled

by hidden cultural schemata” (Rost, 2002, p. 1). Because of the advances in telecommunications in the 1940s, listening was defined as “successful transmission and recreation of messages” (Rost, 2001, p. 1). In the 1960s, listening included listeners’ own experiences to understand the intention of the speaker, while in the 1970s “the cultural significance of speech behavior” was accepted. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was defined as “parallel processing of input” (Rost, 2002, p. 1).

As seen in the various definitions provided above, listening was defined in terms of the way different researchers perceive the world since people have a tendency to define things with their beliefs and interests (Rost, 2002). Although all these definitions differ in some aspects, they also share common perspectives in the sense that listening is “receptive; receiving what the speaker says, constructive; constructing and representing meaning, collaborative; negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding, transformative, creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy” (Rost, 2002, p. 2-3).

O’Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) define listening comprehension as “an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirements” (p. 434). Vandergrift (1999) defines listening as “a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance” (p. 168). It is a great mental activity that the listener requires to coordinate.

Although listening has been accepted as a passive language skill such as reading, when these definitions were taken into account, considering listening as a passive skill would be misleading (Anderson & Lynch, 2003; Lindsay & Knight, 2006). During listening, the listener can be either active or passive depending on the situation. For example, if the listener takes part actively in the process of listening both linguistically and uses his/her non-linguistic knowledge to follow up the message that the speaker intends in a conversation, she/he listens, replies, and asks/answers questions, it is active listening. On the contrary, during passive listening, the listener does not have to take part such as watching news on the television or listening to the radio (Lindsay & Knight, 2010, Littlewood, 1981). As Anderson and Lynch (2003) state, “Understanding is not something that happens because of what speaker says” (p. 6). The listener needs to make connections between what he/she hears and what he/she already knows and at the same time he/she tries to comprehend the meaning negotiated by the speaker (Anderson & Lynch, 2003).

Importance of Listening

Listening plays an important role in communication in people’s daily life. As Guo and Wills (2006) state “it is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values” (p. 3). Several researchers found similar results about the time that people spend for listening in their daily life throughout the years. For example, in his study, Rankin (1928) examined the time spent for communicative activities by different participants (e.g., housewives, teachers and people in various occupations) over 60 days. The results showed that the time spent

for listening in daily communication has the highest percentage for each group of the participants. In addition, according to Mendelson (1994) “of the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50 %; speaking 25-30 %; reading, 11-16 %; and writing, about 9 %” (p. 9). Similarly, in everyday life communication, a person spends 9 % of his/her time for writing, 16 % for reading, 30 % for speaking and 45 % for listening (Hedge, 2000).

Listening has an important role not only in daily life but also in classroom settings. Most people think that being able to write and speak in a second language means that they know the language; however, if they do not have the efficient listening skills, it is not possible to communicate effectively (Nunan, 1998). According to Nunan (1998), “listening is the basic skill in language learning.over 50% of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening” (p. 1). Rost (1994) explains the importance of listening in language classroom as:

1. Listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin.
2. Spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learner. Because learners must interact to achieve understanding. Access to speakers of the language is essential. Moreover, learner’ failure to understand the language they hear is an impetus, not an obstacle, to interaction and learning.
3. Authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to understand language as native speakers actually use it.

4. Listening exercises provide teachers with a means for drawing learners' attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language (p. 141-142).

Listening has an important role both in daily life and in academic contexts so that people sustain effective communication. Listening skills are also important for learning purposes since through listening students receive information and gain insights (Wallace, Stariha & Walberg, 2004).

The Process of Listening

As shown in the various definitions of listening, people experience several stages during the listening process. In the literature, top-down and bottom-up are two common processes that are usually mentioned as listening sub-skills (e.g., Berne, 2004; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Mendelshon, 1994; Rost, 2002).

Brown (2006) defines top-down processing as the process of “using our prior knowledge and experiences; we know certain things about certain topics and situations and use that information to understand” (p. 2). In other words, learners use their background knowledge in order to comprehend the meaning by considering previous knowledge and schemata. On the other hand, bottom up processing refers to the process of “using the information we have about sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers like *first*, *then* and *after that* to assemble our understanding of what we read or hear one step at a time” (Brown, 2006, p. 2, emphasis original). During bottom-up processing, learners hear the words, keep them in their short term memory to combine them with each other and interpret the things that they have heard before. According to Tsui and Fullilove (1998), top down processing is more used by skilled listeners while less-skilled listeners use bottom-up processing. It is

noteworthy to mention that while Vandegrift (2004) states that depending on the purpose for listening, learners may use top-down or bottom-up process more than another, according to Richards (2008), both processes usually happen together in real-life listening. Confirming Vandegrift's (2004) claim, Richards (2008) states that "The extent to which one or the other dominates depends on the listener's familiarity with the topic and content of a text, the density of information in a text, the text type, and the listener's purpose in listening" (p. 10). In that sense, in order to be effective listeners, students should use both bottom-up and top-down processing in listening (Brown, 2006). According to Brown (2006)

"Students must hear some sounds (bottom-up processing), hold them in their working memory long enough (a few seconds) to connect them to each other and then interpret what they've just heard before something new comes along. At the same time, listeners are using their background knowledge (top-down processing) to determine meaning with respect to prior knowledge and schemata" (p. 3).

Similarly, Cahyono and Widiati (2009) state that successful listeners are those who can use both bottom-up and top-down processes by combining the new information and the knowledge that they already know. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005), advanced listening skills are the results of combining listening process with the cognitive development.

Teaching Listening Comprehension

As discussed earlier in this chapter, listening was neglected for a long time (e.g., Morley, 2001). Language teachers realized the importance of listening in the development of the communicative and cognitive skills, yet listening did not start to

take its place in language teaching curriculum until 1970s (Rost, 1990). However, in recent years, with the emphasis given in communication in language teaching, listening started to take its long deserved place in language programs (Richards, 2005). For most second and foreign language learners, being able to communicate in social contexts is one of the most important reasons why they learn a language (Vandergrift, 1997). Through listening, the learners receive input so the development of listening skill is very important in the language classroom as the comprehension of input is essential for learning to take place (Rost, 1994).

Teaching listening comprehension is important since listening lessons “are a vehicle for teaching elements of grammatical structure and allow new vocabulary items to be contextualized within a body of communicative discourse” (Morley, 2001, p. 70). In addition, since English is being used as an international language for communication by people from non-native English speaking countries lately, teaching listening gained more importance (Cahyono & Widiati, 2009). Yet, teaching listening has been a challenge for language teachers for several reasons.

Mendelson (1994) proposes three reasons for why listening was poorly taught. First of all, listening was not accepted as a separate skill to be taught explicitly for a long time. Supporters of the idea argued that language learners would improve their listening skill on their own while they are listening to the teacher during the day. Secondly, teachers felt insecure about teaching listening. The last reason was the deficiencies of the traditional materials for teaching listening comprehension.

Although it is a challenge to teach listening for many foreign language teachers, there have been many improvements in teaching listening over the years

(Field 2008; Mendelson, 1990). According to Rubin (1994), when teachers and researchers understand the significance of the listening skill in language learning and its role in communication, they start to pay more attention to teaching this skill in language classrooms.

Changing format of the listening lesson

Field (2008) summarizes the changing format of listening lesson over the years (see Figure 1 and 2).

<p>Pre-listening</p> <p>Pre-teach vocabulary ‘to ensure maximum understanding’</p> <p>Listening</p> <p>Extensive listening followed by general questions on context</p> <p>Intensive listening followed by detailed comprehension questions</p> <p>Post-listening</p> <p>Teach any new vocabulary</p> <p>Analyse language (<i>Why did the speaker use the Present Perfect here?</i>)</p> <p>Paused play. Students listen and repeat</p>
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Figure 1. Early format of listening lesson (Adapted from Field (2008))

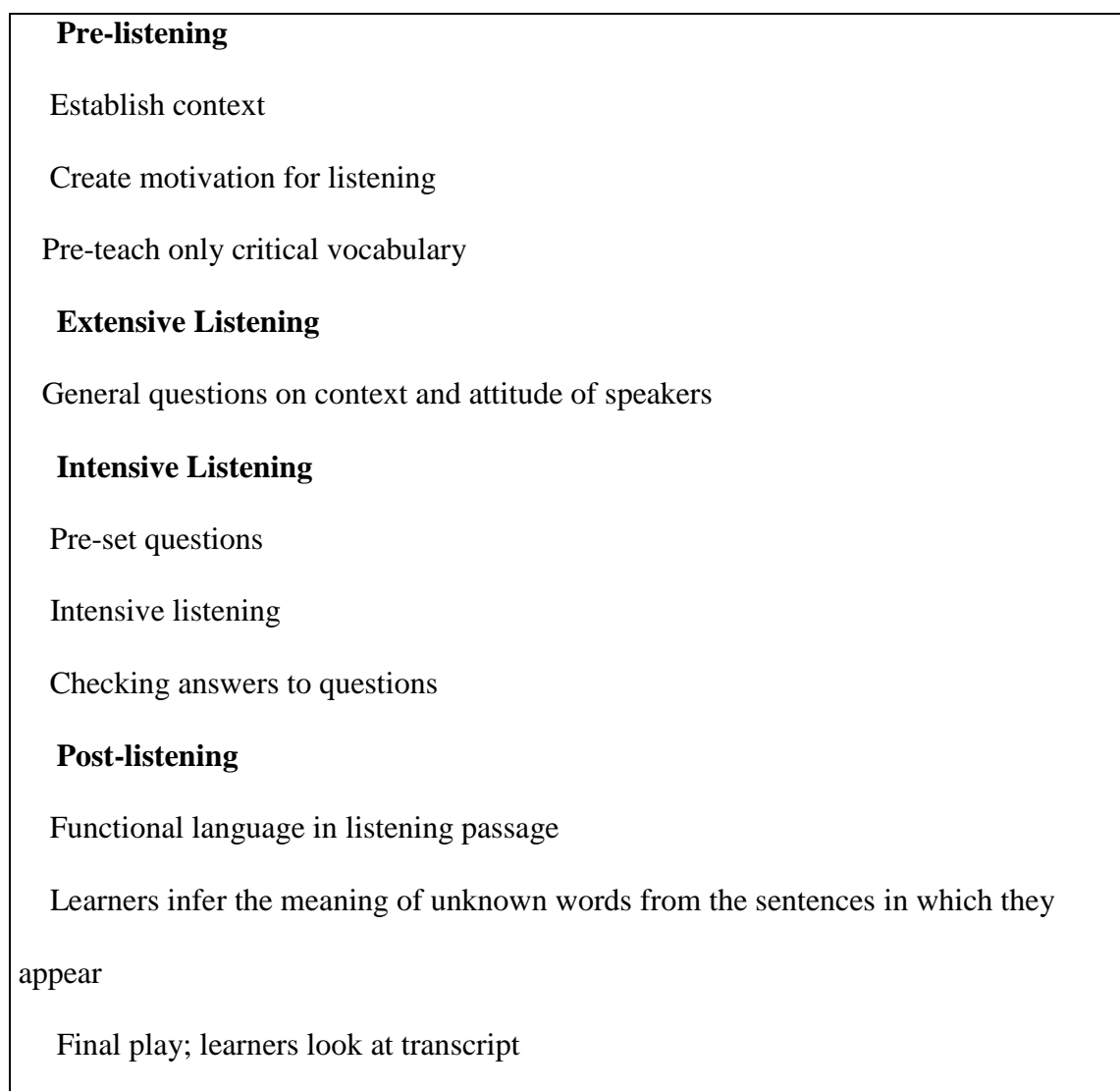


Figure 2. Current format of listening lesson (Adapted from Field (2008))

There are three parts in a usual listening lesson which are pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. Pre-listening part, which involves tasks such as activating previous knowledge of the learners and teaching vocabulary, prepares students for the tasks that they are going to do while listening (Richards, 2005). When current format of a listening lesson is compared with the early format of a listening lesson, teaching unknown vocabulary items shows difference. Field (2008) presents several reasons for not teaching all unknown words. Firstly, it is time consuming to teach unknown words. Field (2008) argues that the time spent for teaching unknown vocabulary can be used for listening to the text again. Secondly, it

is not like real-life listening since students will encounter different words and try to understand them at the time of speaking. Last but not least, by teaching all the words in a text without considering their importance in the text, teachers divert students' attention to form rather than meaning and that is why Field (2008) suggests teaching only critical words which are highly important for students in order to understand the listening text.

In the while-listening part of the lesson, learners do activities such as listening for gist, and sequencing that help them to comprehend the text. Although there are no changes in extensive listening, as can be seen in Figure 2, the structure of the activities has been changed by making them more guided in order to help students follow the texts. The last part of the listening lesson is post-listening to practice the previously learned grammar items. There are many examples of the expressions and language functions in the dialogues that people use in their life such as offering, refusing, apologizing. Since it is difficult to teach these expressions separate from a context, listening passages can be used to draw students' attention to those features during the post-listening part. Also, the post-listening part gives students a chance to state their opinions about a topic. The more teachers are aware of the stages of the listening lesson, the more beneficial they would be to their students while showing interest in their listening comprehension concerns and needs (Field, 2008; Richards, 2005).

Listening Comprehension Problems

Studies conducted on listening in the field of foreign language learning revealed that listening is one of the most difficult skills for language learners (Goh, 2000; Guo & Wills, 2006). Because of the overemphasis on grammar, reading and

vocabulary, learners who learn English as a foreign language have serious problems in listening comprehension (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). Ur (2007) states that students find some features of listening comprehension easier than others. In that sense, some of the main difficulties that the students encounter while listening are; “hearing sounds, understanding intonation and stress, coping with redundancy and noise, predicting, understanding colloquial vocabulary, fatigue, understanding different accents, using visual and aural environmental clues” (Ur, 2007, p. 11-20).

Underwood (1989) also lists the common obstacles that the students experience while listening as speed of delivery, not being able to have words repeated, limited vocabulary, failing to follow signals like transitions, lack of contextual knowledge, being able to concentrate, and habits like trying to understand every word in what they hear.

One of the problems that the students encounter is that the unfamiliar sounds that appear in English but do not exist in their L1, resulting in difficulties to perceive them. For instance, even though Turkish and English have similar consonants, Turkish does not have some of the consonants of English such as /θ/ (thumb) /ð/ (those), which are produced with the tongue tip between the teeth (Yavuz, 2006). In Turkish, the closest sound for /θ/ is /t/ which may cause confusion for Turkish students when they hear the word “three”. Since the /th/ sound does not exist in Turkish students may understand it as the word “tree” or vice versa. Similarly, for the sound /ð/, it is highly possible for students to misunderstand since they may think it is /d/, so when the students hear the word “those” they may think the word that they hear is “doze”.

The use of intonation, stress and rhythm may also prevent learners' understanding of the spoken English. For a language learner, comprehending the meaning of the spoken language needs more effort when they are compared with native speakers of that language. For instance, outside noise or pronunciation differences affect learners more than the native speakers (Ur, 2007). Although learners are able to cope with this situation in their own language, Ur (2007) provides several explanations for why foreign language learners do not have the same ability to cope with such problems. First of all, although language learners recognize the words when they see them in written form or pronounced slowly, learners cannot understand them just because of the rapid speech or they just do not know them. Secondly, learners may not be familiar with the sound-combinations, lexis and collocations which help them make guesses to fill the missing parts. Not being familiar with the colloquial vocabulary is also one of the problems by itself that students face with. Finally, language learners have a tendency to believe that for a successful comprehension they have to understand everything (Ur, 2007).

For language learners, it is difficult to make predictions, especially if they are not familiar with the commonly used idioms, proverbs and collocations. Also, various features of spoken language such as stress and intonation have a significant role for certain situations. In addition, trying to interpret unfamiliar lexis and sounds for a long time is very tiring for many language learners. The different accents they are exposed to could also be problematic for many language learners since especially in EFL context students are used to hear L2 from their teachers who speak English as a foreign language. Yet, English is spoken around the world for communication and they should be provided opportunities to familiarize themselves with different accents which may help them to overcome this problem (Ur, 2007; Underwood

1989). According to Ur (2007), the last problem is students' lack of ability to use the environmental clues to grasp the meaning. It is not because students cannot perceive the visual clues since they can do it in their L1 but they lack the ability to use these visual clues while listening to the target language, a process in which learners work really hard to understand the native speakers and catch the little details. Ur (2007) states that "their receptive system is overloaded" (p. 21), which as a result, makes them stressed. Since listeners try to catch most of the details in a text while listening in a foreign language, they spend more effort than a native speaker does. That is, since the non-native speakers of the language focus on the actual meaning of the words, they only focus on the literal meaning while having no time to comprehend the conventional aspect of it. Thus, not being able to comprehend the pragmatic meaning of the words/phrases causes listening comprehension problems.

Some of the studies that have been conducted on the difficulties students experienced in listening focused on speech rate (e.g., Blau, 1990; Conrad, 1989; Derwing & Munro, 2001; Griffiths, 1990; Khatib & Khodabakhsh, 2010; Mc Bride, 2011; Zhao, 1997), vocabulary (e.g., Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1980; Kelly, 1991) as well as the effect of phonological features and background knowledge of the listeners (e.g., Chiang and Dunkel, 1992; Henrichsen, 1984; Markham & Latham, 1987; Matter, 1989). However, one of the ways to provide solutions to students' problems is first investigating their perceptions of listening comprehension problems.

Current Research Conducted on Listening Comprehension Problems of Language Learners

There have been many studies conducted on students' listening comprehension problems by taking students' perspective into consideration. In one

of her studies specifically examining learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems, Goh (2000), approaching the issue from a cognitive perspective, considered the three phases of listening process: perception, parsing, and utilization. The participants in that study were a group of Chinese students who were learning English to prepare for undergraduate studies. The data were collected through three different instruments; diaries, semi-structured group interviews, and immediate retrospective verbalization procedures. The study revealed ten problems related to these phases (see Figure 3).

Perception	Do not recognize words they know Neglect the next part when thinking about meaning Cannot chunk streams of speech Miss the beginning of texts Concentrate too hard or unable to concentrate
Parcing	Quickly forget what is heard Unable to form a mental representation from words heard Do not understand subsequent parts of input because of earlier problems
Utilization	Understand words but not the intended message Confused about the key ideas in the message

Figure 3. Problems related to different phases of listening comprehension (Adapted from Goh, 2000, p. 59).

Although it is not possible to observe the cognitive processes students engage in directly, the problems that they encounter and the factors that influence their listening skills should be recognized (Goh, 1999). According to Goh (2000), the five

most common listening comprehension problems students face are “quickly forget what is heard, do not recognize words they know, understand words but not the intended message, neglect the next part when thinking about meaning, unable to form a mental representation from words heard” (p. 60).

Another study exploring Arabic learners’ perceptions and beliefs about their listening comprehension problems in English, ineffective usage of listening strategies, the listening text itself, the speaker, the listening tasks and activities, the message, and listeners’ attitudes were found to be the sources of their listening comprehension problems. When students were asked to list their listening problems, the most common answers were poor classroom conditions, not having visual aids, unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear pronunciation, speech rate, boring topics and being exposed to longer texts (Hasan, 2000).

Similar to Hasan’s (2000) study, Graham (2006) looked at the learners’ perspectives of listening comprehension problems. She also investigated learners’ views of the reasons behind their success. The participants were 16-18 years old high school students who were studying French as an L2. The data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results of the study revealed that dealing with the delivery of the spoken text, trying to hear and understand the individual words were some of the problems reported by the learners. Most learners stated that their low listening ability, difficulties of the tasks and the texts, and not being aware of effective listening strategies were the factors that affected their success.

One of the latest studies about students’ listening comprehension problems was conducted by Hamouda (2012) with 60 EFL Saudi learners who were asked to

answer a questionnaire and were interviewed. The results revealed that the students' major listening comprehension problems were pronunciation, speed of speech, insufficient vocabulary, different accent of speakers, lack of concentration, anxiety, and bad quality of recording.

As indicated in these studies focusing on the perceptions of language learners regarding listening, unknown vocabulary items, difficulty of understanding different accents, speed of speech, trying to understand every detail, not being aware of the effective listening strategies are some of the problems students have to tackle with in listening.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the relevant literature on the listening skill, history of listening in ELT, its importance in teaching, and the most common listening comprehension problems of language learners and related studies were provided. The next chapter presents the research methodology used in this study, including setting, participants, instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The present study focused on the listening comprehension problems of EFL students. The purpose of the study is twofold a) to find out learners' and teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems in an EFL context, b) to investigate teachers' reported practices of dealing with these listening comprehension problems. In this respect, the research questions addressed by this study are:

- 1) What are university level EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems?
- 2) What are the teachers' reported practices of dealing with these perceived listening comprehension problems?

This chapter provides information about the methodology of this study in four sections. First, the information about setting and participants are provided. In the second section the instrument used in the study is explained. In the third section, data collection procedures are described and the last section explains data analysis.

Setting and Participants

The present study was conducted at Anadolu University, the School of Foreign Languages. The School of Foreign Languages offers a one-year Intensive English Language Program (IELP) for more than 3000 students who are coming from different regions of Turkey to receive their university education. Depending on their success at the preparation program, students study one or two years at the School of Foreign Languages before they start their education in their faculties.

According to the curriculum of this program, as identified by the Curriculum Development Unit of the school and adapted from Common European Framework in order to write its own goals and objectives, five proficiency levels were identified: A, B1.1, B1.2, B2.1 and B2.2¹. At the beginning of the academic year, students are administered a proficiency exam and those who score under 60 are placed in different classrooms considering their different proficiency levels. In the Program, there are five modules, each of which lasts eight weeks. Students are expected to complete all the modules successfully before they go to their departments. The school follows an integrated skill approach and offers 20 to 26 hours of lesson a week depending on the proficiency level of students. Each teacher teaches two different classes and each class has two different teachers. One of the teachers is accepted as the main teacher of the classroom and responsible for submitting the students' grades for quizzes, online homework. Depending on the classroom's level, each classroom has different lesson hours. For example for B1.1 level has 24 hour-lesson in a week. Each teacher has 12 hour-lesson for that classroom, and the other 12 hour-lesson is for the other teacher. Teachers follow the same syllabus which means the teacher who has a class after his/her partner continues from the part where his/her partner left off. The classes are equipped with technological devices such as projectors and internet connection, and teachers regularly make use of these devices.

The participants of the present study were B1.2 level students and the teachers who were teaching B1.2 level at the time of the study. In addition, the teachers who taught B1.2 level a module before the time of the study were also included in order to receive more opinions. The reason why B1.2 level students were chosen for this study is that the lower level students may not be aware of their

¹ A level is basic, B level is independent and C is accepted as proficient user

listening comprehension problems since they would have been exposed to such an intensive English program for only 3 months at the time of the study, and the upper levels may have already overcome their listening problems. In addition, in the school's system, B1.2 level is also in the middle and can be a good representative of the school population. A total of 423 B1.2 level preparatory school students attending the IELP at the School of Foreign Languages and 49 (31 Female, 18 Male) teachers participated in this study. The students are from different majors and are young adults between the ages of 18-28. The teachers who participated in the study have different educational backgrounds (see Table 1) and years of experience (see Table 2).

Table 1

Distribution of teachers by educational background

Teachers' major	Frequency	Percent
Department of English Language Teaching	39	79.6
Department of English Language and Literature	3	6.1
Department of American Culture and Literature	4	8.2
Department of Translation and Interpreting	2	4.1
Department of Linguistics	1	2
Total	49	100.0

Table 2

Distribution of teachers by years of experience

Years of experience	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years of experience	9	18.4
6-10 years of experience	13	26.5
11-15 years of experience	17	34.7
16 and more years of experience	10	20.4
Total	49	100.0

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, most of the teachers graduated from English Language Departments of their universities and the majority of the teachers have 11 to 15 years of teaching experience.

Instruments

The data were collected by means of three sources: a perception questionnaire was administered to both the students and teachers and follow-up interviews were held with the teachers. For this survey, a 5 point Likert scale ranging from ‘1’ representing *never* to ‘5’ *always* questionnaire which was adapted from Hasan (2000) by another Turkish researcher, Demirkol (2009) was used. The questionnaire had sufficient variety to cover most of the problems mentioned in the literature. There are 30 items in the student questionnaire. The researcher adapted the same questionnaire for the teachers by making the necessary pronoun changes. For example, the item in the student questionnaire, “I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly” was readjusted for teachers as “My students find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly” (see Appendix 1 for students’ questionnaire). The 30 items in the questionnaire grouped

under five categories which were labeled as message, task, speaker, listener, and strategy (see Appendix 5).

The teachers' questionnaire consists of two parts. Teachers' consent and their demographic information which includes the teachers' years of experience and their university majors were asked together with the open ended part of the questionnaire, Part A, which asks teachers to list students' listening comprehension problems (see Appendix 2). Part B was the teacher version of the questionnaire which also includes 30 questions asking teachers' opinions about students' listening comprehension problems. This part measured students' listening comprehension problems through a 5 point Likert scale ranging from '1' representing *never* to '5' *always* (see Appendix 3).

In order to explore the teachers' reported classroom practices, interview questions were prepared by the researcher considering the survey results. Some general questions were added to the interview questions such as teachers' general thoughts about the listening skill and about the listening sections of the course book which is used in the class (see Appendix 4).

Data Collection Procedures

After receiving the necessary permissions to conduct the study from the administration of the School of Foreign Languages, the researcher contacted the teachers who worked with B1.2 level students during the time of the study and previous module. First, the teachers' demographic information was collected, and their consent was taken with the first part of the questionnaire which asked teachers to list the listening comprehension problems of the B1.2 level students, which was also the open-ended part of the questionnaire. The reason why teachers were asked to

list B1.2 level students' listening comprehension problems first was to receive the ideas that came to teachers' minds first and not to canalize their ideas with the help of items that they would see in the questionnaire.

After that part of the data was collected, teachers were given the 30 item perception questionnaire. Students were given the questionnaire by their own classroom teachers. Since the teachers usually work with in a very tight schedule, the researcher thought that classroom teachers would decide the most appropriate time to ask students to complete the questionnaire during their lesson. Since the questionnaire was in Turkish, no problems were experienced and teachers also completed a very similar questionnaire so they were able to answer students' questions if it was necessary.

As a second step of the study, with the help of the results of the questionnaires interview questions were prepared. Although all the teachers who participated in the study answered the questionnaire related to their perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems, twelve teachers were chosen to be interviewed according to the results of the questionnaire. After the analysis of quantitative data, the items that showed significant difference were found out. For most of the items students' mean scores were lower than teachers' mean scores. Therefore, in order to identify teachers who share the same perception with their students, teachers' answers were examined one by one. Six teachers were chosen to be interviewed among the teachers who gave lower score to the items that showed significant difference by considering their years of experience. In total, 12 teachers, including six teachers who share the same perception with students and six teachers who do not share the same perception with students, were interviewed. Thirteen

questions were prepared for the interview. While five questions were asked to teachers in order to learn about their general opinions towards listening lessons, the importance of listening, students' listening comprehension problems, and the book that they are using. The rest of the questions were adapted from the questionnaire and asked teachers in order to learn about their classroom practices. The interviews, which lasted 10-20 minutes, were transcribed and analyzed by considering the categories in the questionnaire (See Appendix 6 for sample interview transcripts).

Data Analysis

Firstly, the data coming from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20). In order to compare the perceptions of the teachers and students about students' listening comprehension problems, an independent samples *t*-test was administered to see if there is a statistically significant difference between two groups in terms of their perceptions.

As a second step, the data coming from the interviews that aimed at collecting qualitative data related to teachers' reported classroom practices were analyzed thematically. The recorded data were transcribed and translated from Turkish to English. Transcripts from the interviews were analyzed by the researcher using color coding. Similar opinions, practices were highlighted and themes were formed under each sub-category of the questionnaire.

Conclusion

The methodology of the study was described in detail in this chapter. The setting and participants, instrument that was used in data collection, data collection procedures and analysis of the data were explained. The next chapter will present the findings coming from the data analysis of the research.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of university level students' listening comprehension problems, who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in order to compare it with the students' perceptions, as well as to find out about teachers' reported classroom practices to deal with these listening comprehension problems. The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What are university level EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems?
2. What are the teachers' reported practices of dealing with these perceived listening comprehension problems?

In order to answer these questions, 423 students and 49 teachers were given a questionnaire to receive their perceptions about students' listening comprehension problems. Twelve teachers who were chosen by considering the survey results were interviewed in order to learn their classroom practices.

Data Analysis Procedure

Before administering the 30 item questionnaire, teachers were asked to list B1.2 level students' listening comprehension problems in order to learn about the ideas that came to their mind first and not to affect their ideas with the help of items that they would see in the questionnaire.

After collecting that part of the data, both teachers and students received the questionnaire which has five sub groups as message, task, speaker, listener, and

strategy use related problems. When all the quantitative data were collected, the data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20).

Descriptive statistics were used to find out the most and the least frequently reported listening comprehension problems. An independent samples t-test was used in order to compare teachers' and students' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems and to see whether the perceptions of teachers were statistically different from students' perceptions. In the teachers' questionnaire, Part A, teachers were asked to answer an open ended question which required them to list the listening comprehension problems of B1.2 level students. All the responses from teachers were listed and matched with the related questions in the questionnaire. They were grouped under the sub-categories of the questionnaire as message, task, speaker, listener and strategy use related problems. In addition, 12 teachers who were chosen according to the survey results were interviewed in order to find out their reported classroom practices and their general perceptions about students' listening skills. Since the interview questions were prepared according to the teachers' responses to the questionnaire items the interview data were analyzed also according to the sub categories of the questionnaire. The results will be presented in accordance with the research questions of the study.

EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems

The most and least frequent listening comprehension problems reported by students and teachers were revealed using descriptive statistics. The examples of differences between teachers and students' opinions about the most frequent listening problems can be seen below in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 3

The most frequent listening problems reported by teachers

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
23	Listener	4.67
18	Speaker	4.60
12	Strategy	4.45

Note1: Item # 23 is about unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of the tape recorder

Item # 12 is about providing pre-listening information about the text

Item # 18 is about pace of speech

Note 2: Students' mean score for item #23 is 4.16, for item #12 is 3.97, for item #18 is 4.27.

Table 4

The most frequent listening problems reported by students

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
5&18	Speaker	4.27
13	Speaker	4.25
23	Listener	4.16

Note 1: Item # 5 is about pronunciation

Item # 18 is about pace of speech

Item # 13 is about providing tape scripts before listening

Item # 23 is about unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of the tape recorder

Note 2: Teachers' mean score for item #5 is 4.39, for item #18 is 4.60, for item #13 is 4.02, for item #23 is 4.67.

While teachers considered the most important problems of students related to listener, strategy and speaker categories, students stated that the most frequent listening comprehension problems were related to speaker and listener. Table 3 and Table 4 show the least frequent problems reported by teachers and students.

Table 5

The least frequent listening problems reported by teachers

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
10	Strategy	2.85
4	Task	2.86
14	Task	3.02

Note 1: Item # 10 is about predicting the words (students' score is
 Item # 4 is about predicting what speakers are going to say from the title of
 the text
 Item # 14 is about filling a chart or graphic

Note 2: Students' mean score for item #10 is 2.89, for item #4 is 2.55, for item #14 is 2.89.

Table 6

The least frequent listening problems reported by students

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
4	Task	2.55
29	Speaker	2.74
7	Listener	2.87

Note 1: Item # 4 is about predicting what speakers are going to say from the title of
 the text
 Item # 29 is about difficult grammatical structures interfering students'
 understanding
 Item # 7 is about answering questions which require long answers

Note 2: Teachers' mean score for item #4 is 2.86, for item #29 is 3.35, for item #7
 is 3.73.

For the least frequent listening comprehension problems, although item # 4 related to task category is common for teachers' and students' answers, the score given to that item is slightly different. While teachers considered the least stated problems from task and strategy category, students' responses showed variety which consisted of different categories as task, speaker and listener. An independent

samples t-test was conducted in order to find out whether there was any significant differences between the teachers and students about students' listening comprehension problems by considering the message, task, speaker, listener and strategy categories.

Message related problems

There are three items under message related problems scale (see Figure 4).

Item #	Description
6	interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text
15	unfamiliar words
27	Difficult grammatical structures

Figure 4. Message related problems

Table 7 below shows the perception differences between teachers and students on message related problems.

Table 7

Perception Differences on Message Related Problems

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Items						
6	T	4.06	.687	469	4.177	.000*
	S	3.45	.994			
15	T	4.12	.526	469	2.010	.045**
	S	3.81	1.088			
27	T	3.84	.717	468	1.020	.308
	S	3.68	1.018			

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

As shown in Table 7, the findings indicated a statistically significant difference between teachers' ($M=4.06$, $SD=.687$) and students' perception ($M=3.45$, $SD=.994$) in terms of message related problems for item # 6 (interpreting the

meaning of a long spoken text), ($t(469)=4.177$), $p<.01$). Similarly, for item # 15 (unfamiliar words interfering students' listening comprehension), the results showed that teachers ($M=4.12$, $SD=.526$) and students ($M=3.81$, $SD=1.088$) have different perceptions ($t(469)=2.010$), $p<.05$). For both items, it can be concluded that while teachers consider problems related to long texts and unknown vocabulary items important, students stated that they are not that problematic for them. As for the last item in this scale (item # 27), which was about difficult grammatical structures, findings revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers' and students' perceptions.

The items that show significant difference, which are about interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text and unfamiliar words interfering students' listening comprehension, suggest that students do not experience these listening comprehension problems as frequently as their teachers think.

Task related problems

Task related problems include five items (see Figure 5).

Item #	Description
3	holding a discussion after listening a text
4	predicting what is going to be said
11	writing a summary of the spoken text
14	filling a chart or graphic while listening
17	taking notes

Figure 5. Task related problems

Table 8 presents the perception differences between teachers and participants on task related problems.

Table 8

Perception Differences on Task Related Problems

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Questions						
3	T	3.51	.711	467	3.256	.001*
	S	3.04	.980			
4	T	2.86	.736	469	2.058	.000*
	S	2.55	1.023			
11	T	3.80	.763	469	3.377	.001*
	S	3.27	1.058			
14	T	3.02	.721	468	.852	.395
	S	2.89	1.036			
17	T	3.73	.730	469	3.527	.000*
	S	3.20	1.033			

* $p < .01$

Independent samples t-tests results showed that four of the items have statistically significant differences except for only one item which is about students finding difficult it to fill a chart or graph while listening. For the item # 3 (holding discussion after listening to a spoken text), results showed that teachers ($M=3.51$, $SD=.711$) and students ($M=3.04$, $SD=.980$) have different perceptions ($t(467)=3.256$, $p<.01$). About item # 4 (predicting what is going to be said from the title of the spoken text) findings revealed a statistically significant difference between teachers' ($M=2.86$, $SD=.736$) and students' ($M=2.55$, $SD=1.023$) opinions ($t(469)=2.058$, $p<.01$). Similar to these results, for the next item #11 (writing a summary of the spoken text) teachers ($M=3.80$, $SD=.763$) stated opposite ideas with their students ($M=3.27$, $SD=1.058$), ($t(467)=3.377$), $p<.01$). In line with the previous

three items, for item # 17 (note taking) teachers ($M=3.73$, SD) and students ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.033$) have a different perceptions ($t(469)=3.527$), $p<.01$). On the other hand, for item # 14, which is about filling a chart or graphic while listening, results showed that there is not a statistically significant difference between teachers' and students' ideas.

The items that show significant difference, which are about holding discussion after listening to a spoken text predicting what is going to be said from the title of the spoken text, writing a summary of the spoken text and note taking show that students do not experience these listening comprehension problems as frequently as their teachers think.

Speaker related problems

Speaker related problems consist of seven items (see Figure 6).

Item #	Description
1	pronunciation
5	visual clues
13	providing tape scripts before listening
16	understanding a natural speech with hesitations
18	understanding well when the speakers speak fast
28	varied accents
29	understanding the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.

Figure 6. Speaker related problems

Table 9 displays the perception differences on speaker related listening comprehension problems of students.

Table 9

Perception Differences on Speaker Related Problems

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Questions						
1	T	4.06	.592	464	2.951	.003*
	S	3.67	.901			
5	T	4.39	.731	469	1.011	.313
	S	4.27	.776			
13	T	4.02	1.031	469	-1.791	.074
	S	4.25	.841			
16	T	3.86	.612	468	3.546	.000*
	S	3.30	1.080			
18	T	4.61	.533	470	2.823	.005*
	S	4.27	.836			
28	T	4.22	.823	470	2.457	.014**
	S	3.89	.907			
29	T	3.35	.969	470	3.799	.000*
	S	2.74	1.073			

*p<.01, **p<.05

As Table 9 presents, the majority of the items related to speaker related problems showed statistically significant differences between teachers and students. First of all, for the item # 1 (pronunciation), while teachers ($M=4.06$, $SD=.592$) think that students have difficulty in understanding the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly, results showed that students ($M=3.67$, $SD=.901$) do not agree with their teachers ($t(464)=2.951$, $p<.01$). Likewise, for the item # 16 (understanding natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses) teachers

($M=3.86$, $SD=.612$) and the students ($M=3.30$, $SD=1.080$) support different views ($t(468)=3.546$, $p<.01$). One of the other items that show statistically significant difference between teachers and students is item # 18 (pace of the speaker). While teachers ($M=4.61$, $SD=.533$) think that it is difficult for students to understand well when the speakers speak too fast, surprisingly students ($M=4.27$, $SD=.836$) stated the opposite ($t(470)=2.823$, $p<.01$). In terms of varied accent (28), teachers' ($M=4.22$, $SD=.389$) and students' ($M=3.89$, $SD=.907$) perceptions again show differences ($t(470)=2.457$, $p<.05$). Interestingly, according the students' results, they do not experience listening comprehension problems related to varied accents as much as their teachers think. As the last item of speaker related problems, for item #29 (understanding the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language) in line with the previous items, teachers ($M=3.35$, $SD=.969$) and students ($M=2.74$, $SD=1.073$) express different perceptions ($t(470)=3.799$, $p<.01$).

As a conclusion, the results about the speaker related listening comprehension problems showed that while teachers perceived those aforementioned items frequently experienced by their students, students expressed that they do not experience them as frequently as their teachers think. When the last two items, item # 5 (visual clues) and item # 13 (providing tape scripts before listening) were considered, the findings revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers' and students' views.

Listener related problems

Listener related problems have the most items in the questionnaire (see Figure 7).

Item #	Description
2	feeling nervous because of not being able to understand the spoken text
7	answering questions which require long answers
8	preferring teachers reading aloud than recorded spoken text
9	not being able to concentrate when missing a few words
20	spending great effort that makes students feel tired
21	quickly forgetting the words that they hear
22	finding uninteresting texts difficult
23	unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of the tape recorder
25	not being able to understand the general idea of a text from the first listening
26	outside noise and poor classroom conditions

Figure 7. Listener related problems

Table 10 below includes the items that are listener related problems.

Table 10

Perception Differences on Listener Related Problems

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Questions						
2	T	4.10	.684	469	3.242	.001*
	S	3.52	1.236			
7	T	3.73	.730	469	5.657	.000*
	S	2.87	1.041			
8	T	3.82	.950	468	3.631	.000*
	S	3.08	1.375			
9	T	3.82	.697	470	1.874	.062
	S	3.50	1.143	81.646		
20	T	3.57	.764	469	2.160	.031**
	S	3.23	1.075			
21	T	3.49	.681	467	2.575	.010**
	S	3.08	1.093			
22	T	3.90	.797	470	3.584	.000*
	S	3.28	1.168			
23	T	4.67	.555	469	3.447	.001*
	S	4.16	1.027			
25	T	3.06	.775	468	-1.091	.276
	S	3.22	.973			
26	T	3.96	.967	467	1.456	.146
	S	3.70	1.181			

*p<.01, **p<.05

In order to see the perception differences between teachers and students on listener related problems an independent samples t-test was run, and the results showed that seven of ten items have statistically significant differences. For item # 2 (feeling nervous because of not being able to understand the spoken text) results

revealed that there is a significant difference in the scores of the teachers ($M=4.10$, $SD=.684$) and the students ($M=3.52$, $SD=1.236$); ($t(469)=3.242$), $p<.01$) which means teachers and students expressed different opinions. While teachers thought that their students feel nervous if they do not understand while listening, students claimed the opposite. Item # 7 (answering questions which require long answers) also showed a significant difference between teachers' ($M=3.73$, $SD=.730$) and students' ($M=2.87$, $SD=1.041$) ideas; ($t(469)=5.657$), $p<.01$). Unlike their teachers, students do not think that answering questions which require other than short answers was a problem for them. One of the other items that showed a significant difference is item # 8 (students preferring teachers reading aloud than recorded spoken text) for which the results revealed that teachers ($M=3.82$, $SD=.950$) and students ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.375$) have different opinions; ($t(470)=2.457$), $p<.01$). For item # 20 (spending great effort that makes students feel tired) again there is a significant difference between teachers' ($M=3.57$, $SD=.764$) and students' ($M=3.23$, $SD=1.075$) ideas ($t(469)=2.160$), $p<.05$).

One of the other items that show statistically significant difference between teachers and students is item # 21 (quickly forgetting the words that students hear). While teachers ($M=3.49$, $SD=.681$) considered that students quickly forget the words that they hear, surprisingly students ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.093$) stated the opposite ($t(467)=2.575$), $p<.05$). For the item # 22 (finding uninteresting texts difficult), while teachers ($M=3.90$, $SD=.797$) think that students find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to them, results showed that students ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.168$) do not agree with their teachers ($t(470)=3.584$), $p<.01$). The last item which shows a significant difference is item # 23 (unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of the tape recorder). Although students ($M=4.16$, $SD=1.027$) expressed that

it is not a problem for them, teachers ($M=4.67$, $SD=.555$) supported the idea that unclear sounds causes listening comprehension problems for their students ($t(469)=3.447$, $p<.01$). The findings produced non-significant results when item # 9 (not being able to concentrate when missing a few words), item # 25 (not being able to understand the general idea of a text from the first listening) and lastly item # 26 (not being able to understand outside noise and poor classroom conditions) were considered. The result related to non-significant items shows that students

The items that show significant difference, which are about students' feeling nervous because of not being able to understand the spoken text, answering questions which require long answers, students preferring teachers reading aloud than recorded spoken text, spending great effort that makes students feel tired, quickly forgetting the words that students hear finding uninteresting texts difficult and unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of the tape recorder , indicate that students do not experience these listening comprehension problems as frequently as their teachers think.

Strategy use related problems

There are five items under this category (see Figure 8).

Item #	Description
10	predicting the words
12	giving pre-listening information
19	about using experience and background knowledge of the topic
24	paying attention to the topic markers
30	Listening to very detail to get the main idea

Figure 8. Strategy use related problems

Table 11 shows the perception differences between teachers and students on strategy use related problems.

Table 11

Perception Differences on Strategy Use Related Problems

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Questions						
10	T	2.85	.714	465	-.196	.844
	S	2.89	1.161			
12	T	4.45	.647	466	3.644	.000*
	S	3.97	.895			
19	T	3.18	.858	468	-.687	.492
	S	3.30	1.190			
24	T	3.06	.719	470	-2.205	.028**
	S	3.43	1.160			
30	T	3.39	.862	468	.913	.362
	S	3.24	1.113			

*p<.01, **p<.05

As Table 11 presents, the findings indicated a statistically significant difference between teachers' ($M=4.45$, $SD=.647$) and students' perception ($M=3.97$, $SD=.895$) in terms of strategy use related problems for item # 12 (giving pre-listening information), ($t(466)=3.644$, $p<.01$). Similarly, for item # 24 (paying attention to the topic markers), the results showed that teachers ($M=3.06$, $SD=.719$) and students ($M=3.43$, $SD=1.160$) have statistically different perceptions ($t(470)=-2.205$, $p<.05$). Although students and teachers express different perceptions for these items, for item # 12, the teachers thought that providing pre-listening information improve students' listening comprehension, students express an opposing idea in line with previous items. However, for item # 24 students stated that they pay attention to topic markers while listening, while teachers think their students do not. As for the other items in this scale (10- predicting the words, 19- using experience and background knowledge of the topic, and 30- listening to every detail to get the main idea) findings revealed that there is not a statistically significant difference between teachers' and students' perceptions.

Except for one item, which is about students paying attention to the topic markers, teachers' overall mean scores are always higher than students' mean scores. Even though the statistical results show a significant difference about teachers' and students' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems, the results should not be interpreted as if there was a mismatch. The perception difference may indicate that teachers may be more aware of their students' listening comprehension problems.

Teachers' Reported Practices of Dealing with Perceived Listening Comprehension Problems

In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 teachers in order to investigate their reported classroom practices and their general perceptions about students' listening skills. Although six of the teachers do not have the same perceptions with students (will be referred to as teachers in group A) and six of them have (will be referred as teachers in group B), it should be noted that for most of the questions teachers gave similar answers. The interviews consisted of 13 interview questions. The first five questions aimed to find out teachers' general perspectives towards teaching listening, and the rest of the questions were chosen from the survey results by considering the sub-categories of the questionnaire. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed by considering the sub-categories of the questionnaire.

General Perspectives towards Teaching Listening

How teachers consider listening

When teachers were asked about their general ideas about listening, without any exception, teachers stated that listening is a very important skill for their students. Teachers in group A stated that;

Like all the other skills, listening is also one of the skills that helps speaking. Since it is not possible to communicate without understanding the person that you are interacting, listening is the primary elements of communication. Listening is very important for students because language is not composed of only reading or writing, it is a whole concept and I believe all skills are equally important.

Similarly, teachers in group B said that;

Listening is one of the most important components of communication. Unless students understand what is said, they cannot respond, so it is very important for communication.

Listening is very important. Listening and speaking are the main elements of communication. When we think about whole communication process each of them has % 50 importance.

How students consider listening according to teachers

According to the teachers, in both groups, students approach listening skill very negatively. Most of the teachers stated that students are prejudiced towards listening activities especially when they think that they will not understand. They are bored and lose their concentration very easily. Sample responses of teachers in group A can be seen below.

They are very negative. When I suggest listening to it again when they do not understand, they seem very discouraged.

I do not think that they like listening. They never say “let’s do listening”. They agree to listen just because they think it is necessary, but when they cannot do the activities, they lose their motivation.

Depending on their understanding, they react to the listening text. If the speakers speak too fast for them, or speak with a different accent, it causes a problem, but even if they understand they are not very enthusiastic.

Teachers in group B did not state very different ideas than their colleagues. 3 teachers in this group said nearly the same thing about students’ feelings.

Students are very prejudiced. Since they think they are not going to understand they consider listening as a waste of time.

First of all, students are prejudiced since they think they are not going to understand. They say “we are already behind, and do not know a lot”.

Students are prejudiced. They start listening with a feeling that they are not going to understand.

One of the teachers in the same group stated that;

If students understand the text they are positive, but for some reason if they do not comprehend the text, they become demotivated and develop negative feelings towards listening activities.

These extracts show that according to the teachers students are not very enthusiastic about the listening activities and they easily become demotivated. When teachers were asked how they encourage them to listen, they stated that generally they are talking with them about the importance of listening to motivate them and try to adapt the activities as much as possible in order not to make them too challenging for the students so that they can feel successful.

Students’ Listening Problems according to the Teachers

Before teachers were administered the questionnaire, they were asked to list students’ listening comprehension problems. The data coming from the list were matched with the appropriate items in the questionnaire and counted by the researcher (see Figure 9). The results revealed that unknown vocabulary, varied accents, pace of speech and pronunciation of the speakers considered as the primary

problems of the students. Lack of concentration and students being unmotivated were also stated by teachers.

Message Related	Task Related	Speaker Related	Listener Related	Strategy Related
Item # f*	Item # f	Item # f	Item # f	Item # f
6 10	3 0	1 29	10 2	2 1
15 40	4 0	5 0	12 1	7 1
27 2	11 0	13 0	19 8	8 0
	14 0	16 0	24 1	9 3
	17 0	18 30	30 8	20 0
		28 34		21 0
		29 0		22 1
				23 5
				25 4
				26 6

Figure 9. Students' listening comprehension problems according to teachers
 *f in the figure 6 stands for "frequency" to show how many times that issue came up in the interviews. Item # 4,11,14,17,5,13,16,29,8,20,21 did not occur at all.

When teachers were asked about students' listening comprehension problems, they provided similar answers in line with the frequency analysis. Below are some examples of teacher responses from both groups.

Responses from teachers in group A:

The accents that students are not familiar with are the first problem.

First, pace of speed, second accent and third unknown vocabulary are the major listening problems of the students.

Students' not knowing the correct pronunciation of the word, and lack of concentration are the problems that came to my mind.

Responses from teachers in group B:

Students are not used to hear different accents.

The speed of the speech and the pronunciation of the speaker, intonation are the main problems.

Generally, when students do not know the word it is a problem for them. In addition, different accents distract their attention.

Opinions about the Material Used in Listening Lesson

When teachers' opinions were asked about whether the book is helpful to overcome students' listening comprehension problems, teachers stated contradictory opinions.

Positive opinions towards the book: Some of the teachers in both groups agreed that the book is helpful to some extent. For example, one of the teachers in group B stated that the speakers in the recordings have different accents and the book gives importance to intonation, stress patterns which students do not focus. The participant added that, although students do not pay attention to those structures, with the help of the book they have an opportunity to hear them often. Similarly, one of the other participants in the same group stated that the book is helpful especially while providing background information about the listening text. One of the teachers in group A stated that the book guides students, and gives some tips about listening comprehension.

Negative opinions towards the book: Several teachers in both groups stated that the book itself is not enough. One of the teachers in Group A stated that the listening section of the book was difficult for the students. Although students did not encounter problems about other skills in the book, the participant added that the listening texts were above their students' level. Similarly, one of the teachers in Group B also stated that the level of the listening texts was difficult for the students.

Even though teachers have different opinions about the book, most of them stated that they need to use some extra sources. Although most of the teachers stated that they need to use extra materials, because of the tight schedule, they do not spend extra time for activities outside the book. Even if they use extra materials, they stated it is very limited, and sometimes they do some activities just to motivate students such as listening to a song. One of the teachers in group A stated that;

I cannot use extra material because of the syllabus. However, towards the end of the module I try to bring some texts with different lengths including different type of questions. I try to make good use of last week by having extra exercises.

Time Spent for Listening

When teachers were asked whether they spend enough time for listening in their classes, again, some different opinions emerged. Most of the teachers in both groups stated that they spend time for listening as much as the syllabus allows. That is, they do everything in the book. However, while some teachers think that the time allocated for listening is enough, most of them expressed that they would like to do some more exercises, but in line with the previous answers, because of the tight schedule they cannot spend more time than what the syllabus suggests and the book

offers. Some examples of both groups' teachers' different opinions about the time that they spend for listening can be seen below.

Cannot spend enough time for listening

Some teachers stated that the time that they spend for listening activities is not enough.

Because of the tight schedule, I could not spend enough time for listening; we had to rush. I even did not have time to adapt the listening activities. (Group A)

There are not enough listening activities in the book. The book focuses on vocabulary and speaking activities more (Group B)

With this new system, we had to finish units on time so there is always a rush in order to finish units, which make us skip some parts or not give enough attention to listening parts. Grammar and vocabulary parts have the priority because of the exams. If we had skill based teaching, things could have been different. At that time, teachers would know that they had to spend that class hour only for listening and listening activities would be the focus of the lesson. (Group A)

Can spend enough time for listening

Unlike their colleagues some teachers stated that they can spend sufficient time for listening activities in their lessons.

Yes, I spend enough time for listening activities. If the activity is available I adapt it to note taking activity or prepare True/False questions. I try to use

listening text in different ways. Since we talk about the topic before and after listening, I not only do listening but also have a chance to make them talk as pre and post activity and also teach test taking strategies (Group A)

With this integrated skill books, yes we can spend enough time for listening. Listening activities are connected with the topics that we cover. Thanks to the book, we had to spend time on listening activities (Group B)

In our schools' system, I think we spend enough time. I believe there are enough number of units and listening activities (Group B)

After these general questions which were asked find out teachers' general perspectives towards listening lesson, teachers were asked more specific questions in order to learn their reported classroom practices. Despite the differences in their attitudes towards listening lessons, in terms of their classroom practices teachers stated very similar ideas.

While these were the teachers' overall perceptions towards the listening skill, the next section will present the results of the questions related to teachers' classroom practices by referring to the sub categories of the questionnaire.

Teachers' Reported Classroom Practices

Message Related Problems

One of the questions about message related problems aimed to learn teachers' practices about longer listening texts.

The effects of longer texts on students

Negative effects: Most of the teachers in both groups stated that longer texts have negative effects on students in the sense that the students are bored and do not want to listen to the text, lose their concentration while listening if the listening text is long. Some examples from teachers' responses can be seen below.

First they start to listen, but after a while they lose their focus and do not pay attention then (Group B)

Yes, long texts cause problems. Students are either bored or they miss some points. They try to translate the sentences that they hear in Turkish in their minds, so they miss the rest of the text. Once that happens, they quit listening. (Group A)

Positive effects: Only one teacher in group B mentioned the positive effect of a long text when it is compared with relatively shorter texts. The teacher stated that;

I definitely believe that listening to long texts has positive effects on students. Short dialogs end very quickly and students cannot connect the ideas. I heard this kind of complaint from students. But when they hear something like lectures, they can get the main idea and take notes easily. I did such exercises when I am teaching to B1.2 level last couple of weeks of the module, and I got positive feedback. While they have difficulty in short dialogues, they can catch the main points in longer texts easily.

Although only one teacher stated a different idea, when teachers were asked what they were doing while listening long texts, without any exception they stated that they break it into parts. Here are some examples from teacher responses.

I divide it into several parts and I try to ask questions that they can answer easily. (Group A)

I make them listen to the text part by part. For example, for the main idea we listen to first paragraph and for details we listen again. When the speaker talks about something that the students should understand to answer the questions, I try to take their attention by using gestures or knocking on the board. Thus, they understand that they are about to hear the answer (Group A)

Instead of listening to whole text, I divide it into parts. If there is more than one speaker, we first listen to the first one, answer the questions and then continue with the others. Thus students can concentrate better and answer the questions easily. (Group B)

I divide the listening texts into parts. If there are listening comprehension questions, first, we listen to some part of the text, answer the question and then continue listening for the second question. I try to use visual clues as much as possible. (Group B)

Except for one teacher, all teachers accepted that long texts are problematic for their students considering their proficiency level. Although teachers express different ideas about the effects of long texts, when it comes to their classroom practices they

are very compatible with each other. The first thing that they do is dividing the text into parts in order to help their students to comprehend the text better.

Unknown vocabulary problems

All teachers agreed that to some extent unknown vocabulary causes problems for students. In line with the previous question, teachers' practices do not show much difference. Most of them stated that even if they do not have time for listening to the text, they go over the script before they go to the lesson. They identify the key words and before listening they give the meaning of the possible unknown vocabularies.

One of the teachers in Group A stated that;

Of course unknown vocabulary items affect their understanding. I look up the script beforehand, and if there are any key words, I teach it. If there are not any important words or relevant information related to context that they should know in order to answer the questions, I just tell students that they may hear some unknown words but it will not prevent them to answer the questions.

Teachers added that in this way students become more involved to the listening text and can concentrate better. One of the teachers in group B expressed that;

I make them listen to the text again. Instead of writing the whole word I write the first letter of it and want them to guess. If they still cannot get the meaning after second listening, I say it myself. I do not prefer to give meaning directly, try to make an explanation or use synonyms.

A couple of teachers stated that they directly tell the meaning of the word, even in Turkish sometimes without spending too much time on it. This could be

because of the rush that the teachers are in to catch up with the program, since this is one of the complaints that teachers expressed.

Task Related Problems

Holding a discussion related to topic after listening to a text.

In both groups, the participating teachers stated that students do not like making comments after listening to a text. They added that it is because of students' poor speaking skills. In order to encourage them to speak, they expressed that they ask yes/no, agree/disagree questions. One of the teachers in group B stated;

In general, our students are unwilling to express their opinions. What I do is, asking easier questions to get their opinions. For example, instead of asking what they think about that topic, I ask whether they agree/disagree or I ask yes/no questions, I try to make them speak as much as possible by asking easier questions.

Similarly, one of the teachers in group A stated;

Students always have difficulty in expressing themselves. They always have problems when they are asked to produce something such as pre and post activities for both listening and reading. This may be because they consider listening just answering comprehension questions, and do not pay attention to the other parts of the lesson. The second reason can be being exposed to a subject for the first time in their life only in listening lesson, so they are not able to produce new ideas related to it.

Note taking

All teachers agreed that note-taking is a problematic skill for students, and the book does not cover note taking exercises because of the level of students. According to Common European Framework criteria, students learn note taking strategies in the upper levels. However, teachers stated that they give training on note taking strategies to their students by using their prior knowledge and experiences. One of the teachers in group A stated;

Since the final exam involves note taking part, no matter what my students levels are, if the text is appropriate, I try to teach them how to take notes. They think that they have to write everything, I tell them they should only write key words, use the connectors and transitions as clues.

Similarly, teachers in group B expressed same thoughts. One of the teachers in group B stated;

I tell them to write as brief as possible, suggest them to use symbols, abbreviations instead of whole words or sentences.

Teachers answers here show that even though in the previous scale they have some differences, when it comes to task related problems their practices match with each other.

Speaker Related Problems

Students' reactions to different accents

About the question related to varied accents of the speakers in the recordings, teachers in group A stated that students have negative attitudes towards different

accents. They make fun of the accents of the speakers and complain constantly about the way people speak. One of the participants stated;

Of course they have problems with the accents of the speakers. Even if they are able to understand the speaker, they start listening with prejudice. They criticize speakers' speech. Students say if they understand it, they do not need to be here [preparatory school].

As a follow up question, the teacher was asked what he/she did when he/she received such reflections. The teacher stated that, he/she gives examples from Turkish.

I explain them there are different ways to say same things in Turkish. When they go out, they meet with variety of people, with different speaking style.

Teachers' reactions to different accents

Showing Empathy

Some teachers stated that, sometimes it is really difficult to understand the speakers in the recordings, and they show their empathy to the students by agreeing with them. One of the other teachers in group A stated;

Although most of the recordings are very good, some of them are really difficult for students. For example, the recordings take place in a pub, just for the sake of being authentic, you cannot understand the speaker because of the outside noise in the recordings like, the sounds of other people, or you even hear the plates and other utensils being washed or being placed. At that time,

even if I understand it, I tell my students not to worry about it. This is just an exercise. I try to give them moral support.

Teachers stated that when they agree with the students to show their empathy, the students like it and feel relaxed. Teachers stated that they try to make them become aware of the accent differences. One of the other teachers in group A stated;

In order to motivate them, I remind them that English is being spoken all over the world by different people from different nationalities. So it is important for you to be aware of different accents.

When their classroom practices were asked in both groups, teachers gave similar answers. Some teachers stated that they make students listen to the text again; sometimes they show the scripts of the recording during listening. They show their empathy to the students and they encourage students to watch TV shows, listen to songs outside the classroom.

I write the word on the board if it is a commonly mistaken one. Make them listen to the word again. I try to show them the differences between American and British English. (Group B)

At the end of the listening I let them see script, show them the problematic words in the contexts, and make them repeat (Group B)

I try to encourage them to listen when they complain about the accent of the speakers. I tell them that they will talk English not only with Americans but also with other people from all over the world, they will have different accents. I try to persuade them to pay more attention. (Group A)

The others told that they do not do anything special in the classroom apart from giving suggestions to improve listening outside of the classroom. Below some examples from teachers' reported practices can be seen.

The only thing that I can do is making suggestions. I told them to do self-study outside the classroom, like watching movies, different TV shows etc...

There is nothing that I do specifically in the classroom (Group B)

Honestly, I do not do anything. I tell them that it is the natural way of speaking, try to understand as much as possible, "you should get used to listening by practicing", and that is it. (Group B)

There is not much I can do. I am not a native speaker. The only thing that I can do is opening online dictionary from the internet and make them hear from there again. I ask them to listen something outside the classroom whenever they have a chance. (Group A)

Students' reactions to the natural speech which is full of hesitations and pauses

When teachers were asked about their students' reactions to the speech that is full of hesitations and pauses, teachers expressed different opinions.

Hesitations have positive effects

In both groups some teachers stated that students like hesitations in the speech. They added that students like those kind of expressions, try to imitate them and there is a positive atmosphere in the classroom since students laugh at them.

Since they [students] also do it when they are talking in Turkish, hearing them in English does not cause any problems. (Group A)

Students like them actually, some of them try to imitate the expressions. As teachers, we also use fillers or hesitate in the classroom while talking. It does not seem like a problem for them. (Group A)

Students do not have any problem at all. There has been an incident about fillers and I told them to try to use such expressions, and they did not have any difficulties, and used them very well. (Group B)

Hesitations have negative effects

There are also some teachers who thought that hesitations in natural speech cause problems for students.

They [students] say that they only hear sounds like “humm” and it does not seem natural to them. They claim that it prevents their understanding. (Group A)

Yes, hesitations cause problem for students. They do not know how to use them in English. They just stay quiet and it bothers them. After a while, they do not want to speak since they give pauses a lot while talking. (Group B)

When teachers were asked what they were doing when the students complain about hesitations, both teachers respond similarly. One of the teachers stated;

I tell them that we do the same thing when we are speaking in Turkish. We want to say something, so while we are organizing ideas in our head we give a pause. In their language these expressions are different than ours, but they are basically the same things.

While teachers answer these questions, they consider their current classrooms and the experiences that they have with them. Because of this situation, even though some of them stated hesitations in the listening text are distractors, most of them stated the opposite. However, no matter what the teachers think, if they consider it as a problem their classroom practices match with each other.

Listener Related Problems

When the teachers were asked about students' reactions towards uninteresting listening topics and teachers' way of dealing with that problem, teachers in both groups provided similar answers. They stated that if students do not like the listening text, they directly say so, start playing with their cell phones or just do not listen to it. In order to solve this problem, one common practice all teachers share is talking to them and informing them about the importance of listening. One of the teachers stated that, even if it is not right to do, the teacher reminds them that listening has an important part in their final exam so they need to focus. One of the teachers in group A stated;

I can guess whether they would like the topic or not so I always prepare a power point to make the topic more intriguing for them. I try to make them think that the activity is going to help them to improve their listening skill and try to give background information as much as possible in pre listening part of the lesson. Therefore they do not react negatively.

Similarly, a teacher from group B stated;

I try to use visual aids before we listen to the text and get some guesses. I try to personalize it as much as possible. I wrote their guesses on the board and

want them to listen to check their guesses. Even if they are not very enthusiastic about listening to the text first, they feel a need to listen to check their guesses.

In addition, adapting the questions, dividing listening into parts, using visual aids on the book are the other practices that teachers do to draw students' attention and try to arouse their interests to the topics.

Strategy use Related Problems

The question asked about strategy use related problems aimed to find out whether students pay attention to expressions like firstly, finally, besides, and how teachers take students' attention to these expressions. Teachers in both groups stated that if the activity in the book focuses on transitions, then students pay attention. Otherwise, only a few students concentrate on expressions like first, finally while listening to a text. Below are some examples.

Students do not pay attention until I say. Although they are learning these expressions while we are doing writing, they have difficulty in transferring this knowledge to other skills. (Group A)

If I do not take their attention, they are not interested in those expressions. I need to make students be aware of them, but it is difficult since every listening text do not include such expressions. (Group A)

Students only pay attention to these expressions if the activity is about them or if it guides them to use the expressions. Otherwise, they do not. (Group B)

When there is a part in the book that includes transitions such as firstly, secondly, there is always a listening related to it and then they pay attention. There can be a chart to be filled, or put a tick, then students pay attention. We examine the sentences there, write them on the board; however, apart from these, while they are doing another listening activity, I do not think that they [students] are paying attention. (Group B)

In terms of their classroom practices, while some teachers agreed that they also do not focus on these expressions if the book does not include them, the others stated that whenever they have a chance, they remind their students how to use such expressions in order to help them better listeners. One of the teachers in group A stated;

I remember taking their attention to these expressions. I tell them to be careful while listening; there is always an introduction, developmental and conclusion parts of a speech. Listen accordingly; those transitions can be clue for you.

Teachers in group B also agree with the teachers in group A. One of the teachers in group B stated that

If there are transitions in the text and they do not know the meaning of it, even if it is not the focus of the lesson, I write it on the board with synonym, if there is, or any possible alternatives that students may confuse.

In conclusion, although teachers' years of experience vary and some of the teachers have similar perceptions with their students about students' listening comprehension and some of them not, when their classroom practices are considered, they have very

similar practices in the classroom which could be the result of graduating from an English Language Teaching department.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented information regarding data analysis and results. The results of this study suggest that when teachers and students' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems are considered, teachers give more emphasis to the students' comprehension problems more than their students do. Interviews conducted with teachers showed that, even though teachers have different perceptions among themselves, in terms of their classroom practices they perform similarly in the classroom in order to help students overcome their listening comprehension problems. The next chapter will discuss the results, limitations, pedagogical implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The aims of this study were to investigate both students' and teachers' perceptions of university level students' listening comprehension problems and find out teachers' reported practices of dealing with these listening comprehension problems. In this respect, the research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What are the university level EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems?
2. What are the teachers' reported practices of dealing with these perceived listening comprehension problems?

The study was conducted with a total of 472 participants (423 students and 49 teachers) who were administered a perception questionnaire on students' listening comprehension problems. The data that emerged from the questionnaires were entered into SPSS (version 20) and an independent samples t-test was conducted in order to find out if there are any differences between the perceptions of the teachers and the students.

In addition, 12 teachers, who were chosen by considering the results of the quantitative data, were interviewed in order to find out their reported classroom practices and their general opinions about listening comprehension. Interview questions were prepared by referring to the teachers' questionnaire responses, and the data coming from the interviews were analyzed according to the sub-categories of the questionnaire.

In this chapter, the research findings of this study will be discussed with reference to the relevant literature. Then, the pedagogical implications and

limitations of the study will be presented and lastly, suggestions will be made for further research.

Findings and Discussion

Since most of the interview questions emerged from the results of the quantitative data, the next section will present a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings together to provide a general picture of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

EFL Teachers' and learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems

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Teachers' reported classroom practices

When students' and teachers' responses were examined with more detailed analysis, the results revealed that most of the items in each sub-category were considered more problematic by the participating teachers. When their scores were compared with the students', except for one item, the mean scores of the teachers were higher than their students' mean scores which suggests that teachers are actually more cautious when it comes to their students' listening comprehension problems. Teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems and their classroom practices will be discussed under each sub-category of the questionnaire.

Message Related Problems

As far as the message related problems are concerned, teachers' and students' perceptions showed significant differences for the items related to the unfamiliar words in the listening text and the long spoken texts. While teachers considered those

items problematic, students did not agree with their teachers. However, when the descriptive statistics are considered, among all the 30 items in the survey, the item related to unknown vocabulary turned out to be the one with the 6th highest mean indicating that unknown vocabularies in the listening text are important for students when it is compared with the other problems in the questionnaire. In addition, in the literature, listening comprehension problems caused by unknown vocabulary items is accepted as one of the major factors that prevents students from understanding a listening text (e.g., Goh, 2000; Hasan, 2000). Ur (2007) states that although students are able to recognize the words when they see they cannot comprehend them when they hear. Thus, students should be familiar with a certain amount of words, which are specifically important, since without knowing the meaning of that particular word, it may really be difficult for students to understand the texts that they listen to (Field, 2008). In the present study, when teachers were asked about their classroom practices about unknown vocabularies, they stated that before listening to a text, they teach the key vocabulary to the students related to listening text. In order to help students overcome their unknown vocabulary related listening problems, teaching only the critical words during the pre-listening stage of the lesson is one of the important practices of teachers (Field, 2008).

The other item that showed a significant difference is about listening to longer texts. Similar to the previous item, teachers consider this one as more problematic than their students do. Since longer texts may include more complex sentences, it is highly possible for students to find them difficult to understand. Also, students' background information about the topic can be limited. In addition, when the length of the text is longer, when students miss some part of it, they might lose interest in the text to follow the rest (Hasan, 2009). On the other hand, students are

not exposed to authentic materials so they only listen to the texts that are prepared for their level. Not having many longer texts may cause the perception differences between teachers and students related to this item.

During the interviews, teachers confirmed that there are not many longer texts in their book, but they also accepted that when there is one, students are unwilling to do the activity, and show signs of boredom. When teachers asked about their classroom practices related to longer texts, without any exception all the teachers stated that they divide the texts into parts if the text is long or if there is more than one speaker in order to make it easier for students to understand.

Task Related Problems

According to the teachers' and students' responses, in four of the five items there was a statistically significant difference. Similar to the previous category, for these four items, teachers considered them more problematic. The items in this category can be organized under the parts of the listening lesson as pre-during-post. The item which is related to the pre-listening part of the lesson is about predicting what is going to be said from the title of the spoken text. During the interviews, the teachers stated that before listening to the text they focus on the key words and elaborate on the pictures of the listening text, if there are, or any other visual clues such as the title in order to prepare students to the listening in the pre-listening phase of the lesson. This practice is also in line with the literature since eliciting predictions during the pre-listening stage by using the title may activate students' schemata and may help them use their background knowledge to complete the task that they are going to do (Richards, 2005). If teachers explicitly inform students about the benefit of effective use of such clues, the next time they listen to a text, they can be more aware of them while answering the listening questions.

The next item in this category is about note taking which students do during listening. According to the results, teachers think that their students have problems about note taking. Teachers also mentioned this problem during the interviews. They stated that their students are not good at note taking strategies, and the book does not cover many listening activities that require students to do note taking. They added that teaching note taking strategies takes place in the next proficiency level, therefore, students at this level are not exposed to many note taking activities. However, since note taking has an important part in students' final exams, some teachers stated that they try to help students' note taking problems by adapting the activities as much as possible to make their students get used to this type of exercises. Students may not consider this as a big problem, since they do what the activity asks them. In addition, if their teachers do not include note taking in the classroom, they may not realize that they have a problem about it, which may cause perception difference between teachers and students.

The last items, which are about integrating skills, belong to the post listening part of the lesson. Students and teachers share different perceptions about holding a discussion and writing a summary of the text after listening. Teachers consider those items more problematic than their students do. The reason why teachers give more emphasis to these items may be related to them being more aware of the fact that integration of skills is important for better learning. It is important to combine listening activities with speaking in order to realize interaction. Since listening and speaking are the fundamental elements of communication, students can improve their listening ability with the help of speaking and they strengthen their speaking ability through listening by doing activities that complete each other (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2011). In addition, Richards (2008) states that by combining listening to speaking

tasks, students will realize the use of language in different contexts. In this way, students can use the language that they hear while communicating. The teachers' reports in the interviews are in line with the literature in the sense that according to them, listening is an important factor of effective communication. Teachers also stated that it is a common problem for students to express their ideas not especially after listening to a text but in general. Teachers expressed that they prefer to ask their students easier and short questions in order to encourage them to attend classroom discussions more, which also supports the idea that teachers try to combine the listening activities with speaking when there is an opportunity to do so. In addition, one of the teachers stated that students are not aware of the importance of listening and consider it only as answering the related comprehension questions of the spoken texts. Hence, the perception differences between teachers and students might result from students' not realizing the importance of integrated skills and how speaking and listening are the two sides of the same coin, which is communication.

Speaker Related Problems

In line with the other categories, teachers considered some items more problematic than their students did. Surprisingly, when students' results were compared with their teachers, the results revealed that pronunciation of the speakers and the accent varieties are more important issues for teachers. The reason why students may not have seen varied accents as their problems like their teachers is that they are generally exposed to American or British English. Although the recently published books give importance to presenting different accents, there may be limited examples in some of the course-books, so students may not realize the differences between the other accents of English and American or British accent. In

addition, teachers are more aware of the importance of knowing the correct pronunciation of words while comprehending the text. Although students and teachers do not share the same perceptions about these two issues in this study, pronunciation and the difficulties in understanding varied accents are accepted as one of the most important factors of students' listening comprehension problems (Zhao, 1997). According to Gaa and Willis (2006), students' knowledge of pronunciation should be developed since not being able to discriminate sounds will affect listening comprehension. When teachers asked about their classroom practices about different accents, they stated that their students have problems about different accents but they are not native speakers of English. That is why, the best solution that they can offer is to raise awareness on different accents and suggest ways to improve their listening outside the classroom by watching TV shows, doing extra listening exercises.

Another item that showed a significant difference under this category was about the speech rate of the spoken text. Although there are differences between teachers' and students' perceptions, according to the results of the descriptive statistics, students also consider this issue as one of their most important listening comprehension problems. The rate of speech in the recordings has always been an issue for language learners (Derwing & Munro, 2001; Zhao, 1997). Turkey is an EFL context and language classrooms are most of the time the only places where learners are exposed to the target language. Even though there are many other possibilities to access English through other sources such as TV shows via the Internet, not everyone might have access to the Internet or only learners who have a personal interest learning a foreign language may follow these TV shows. In addition, many language learners in Turkey focus on grammar because of the Turkish education

system, so they are not invested in the communicative skills which listening is a part of. Hence, even the normal speed can be problematic for some language learners in Turkey. Although speech rate is a controversial issue since slow speech does not always improve students' their listening comprehension (Underwood, 1989), and the literature provides contradictory results as far as the speech rate of the spoken texts is considered (e.g., Blau, 1990; Yousif, 2006), because of the aforementioned reasons related to conditions of Turkish language learners, teachers may have considered speech rate as a problem and have different perceptions than their students.

The next item that teachers considered more important than their students did is about understanding natural speech which is full of hesitations. It should be noted that, a speech has natural hesitations in fact can be considered as an aid for students' listening comprehension. According to Buck (2001);

If the pauses inserted at meaningful syntactic boundaries can aid comprehension, whereas random pauses do not. Hesitations that slow down the speech rate do aid comprehension for L2 listeners, and this applied to both filled and unfilled pauses, as long as listeners recognize the fillers as fillers.
(p. 42)

During the interviews, teachers stated different opinions about this issue. In line with the literature (e.g., Buck 2001), most teachers stated that those pauses and expressions like fillers give students time to think more and they added that students like them and try to imitate them. However, couple of teachers stated that hesitations distract students' attention and lead to loss of concentration.

The last item in this category is about students' having difficulties in understanding the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the gestures and body language of the speaker. However, the results should be considered with cautious

because, even though there is a significant difference in this item when teachers and students' perceptions were compared, descriptive statistics show that students consider not having visual clues as one of their most important problems. Thompson and Rubin (1996) state that new generation students are more familiar with life with TV. When it is compared with only listening from the audio recordings, watching videos is more motivating and interesting for students and also helps students to use more strategies in order to understand the text better. Since listening is an active process and in order to express what is going on and tell what speakers say, listeners choose and comprehend the information that they receive from audial and visual clues (Fang, 2008; Richards, 1983). In that sense, while teachers think that it is beneficial for students to have visual clues during listening, students do not consider it as important as their teachers, which may result from being unaware of the role of the visual clues that will help them to comprehend better.

Listener Related Problems

According the results of the quantitative data, seven of the ten items in this category showed significant differences between teachers' and students' perceptions. The items about students quickly forgetting what they hear and having difficulties in answering questions that require long answers rather than yes/no questions were found to be more problematic by teachers. Listening is a great mental activity in which the listeners need to discriminate the sounds, comprehend grammar structures and vocabulary and make connections between their prior knowledge with new information by using context clues in the spoken text (O'Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989; Vandergrift, 1999). Since teachers are more aware of the processes that students go through during listening, they may have considered this item more

important than their students did. In addition, as it is discussed above, students do not have many note taking activities in their syllabi which may be the reason why they quickly forget what they hear or not use the knowledge to answer more complicated questions by referring to their notes.

Students feeling nervous, tired and finding it difficult to understand the texts which are not of interest to them are the other items that showed significant differences between teachers' and students' perceptions. These items required students to do some self-reflection which is something that may not be used to. Also, students cannot be as objective as their teachers when they talk about themselves. In line with this, during the interviews, when teachers were asked about students reactions to the listening activities and about the topics that they are not interested in, teachers stated that students stop listening and start doing other things such as playing with their cell phones. As a solution, teachers expressed that they try to draw their attention to the topic during pre-listening by asking some questions, providing extra information about the topics or asking them make some guesses about the topic.

The problems caused by unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of recording is another item that showed a significant difference, which is line with the descriptive statistics results since teachers considered it more important than their students did. The last item is about students finding it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than their teacher reading the text aloud. Since teachers are the primary sources that students are familiar with, students are used to their teachers' pronunciation more than recorded texts. Renandya (2011) states that teacher read-aloud is an important strategy to help students improve their listening skills which models fluent reading and pronunciation. According to Renandya (2011), reading aloud is not

only useful for listening but also has many other significant language learning benefits such as improving students' vocabulary, building up background information and helping students' develop more positive attitudes towards language learning that most EFL learners can use.

Strategy Use Related Problems

One of the items that teachers considered more importantly is about the importance of providing pre-listening information to students. Since listening is considered as one of the most difficult skills to acquire for language learners (Goh, 2000; Guo & Wills, 2006), the results indicate that teachers pay attention to the pre-listening part of the lesson. As it is indicated in the literature, pre-listening phase of the lesson is one of the most important parts of the lesson, which enables teachers to prepare students to listen to the text. With the help of the pre-listening activities students' schemata will be activated, and they will be able to combine their previous knowledge with the new information (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992). As Vandergrift (1999) states, "pre-listening activities are crucial to good second language pedagogy" (p. 172). Since pre-listening activities prepares students for the coming activity, and let them focus on the meaning while listening (Vandergrift, 1999) teachers are aware of the importance of pre-listening and pay more attention to it. This finding concurs with the findings related to task related problems where teachers said that they focus on key words and visual clues while preparing their students to listen to the text in pre-listening.

The second item in this category that showed a significant difference between teachers' and students' perceptions was about students paying attention to the transitions such as firstly, secondly, etc. Unlike all the other items, students' mean

score was higher for this item than their teachers which suggest that students consider topic markers while listening more than their teachers. The reason why students pay attention to such markers could be students' being familiar with transitions through the exercises they did to develop other skills, especially writing. Since students are responsible for writing several paragraphs and essays, during the courses they are taught the importance of using transitions in order to organize their writings. Being familiar with such transitions may help students catch the words during listening. When teachers were asked whether their students pay attention to those markers, most of them stated that their students do not pay attention unless they are told to do so, and they added that they try to draw their attention especially if the listening text includes such items. The teachers also stated that there are not many longer listening texts in their book which could be the reason that teachers do not ask their students to pay attention to the topic markers and think that their students do not pay attention to them.

In light of the findings presented above, even though teachers and students share different perceptions about students' listening comprehension problems, it would be misleading to interpret them as there is a mismatch. The results should not suggest that the items that teachers found more important were not considered as their listening problems by students. Although the emphasis given to the problematic items is different, in general, the items that received higher means from teachers are the most frequent listening comprehension problems of the students that are mentioned in the literature, which shows that teachers are aware of their students' problems about listening in detail. For example, both teachers and students think speech rate is an important factor but the degree of importance given to this problem is different. When most of the items that showed significant differences are

considered such as, varied accents, unknown vocabularies, pronunciations, not being able to predict the meaning, it can be concluded that students are not exposed to listening activities as much as they should do, which results in listening comprehension problems even at the university level. Since teachers received formal education in English language teaching departments and most of them are experienced, they are more aware of the importance of listening skill in language learning than their students which could be the reason why aforementioned problems considered more important by them.

Pedagogical Implications

The purposes of this study were to explore both students' and teachers' perceptions of university level students' listening comprehension problems and investigate teachers' reported classroom practices of dealing with these problems. Most of the items that showed significant difference suggest that teachers consider some of the problems more important. In addition, teachers think that those problems were experienced more frequently than their students think. As a result, the most important pedagogical implication of this study is raising students' awareness about the listening skill.

Teachers should make their students be aware of their listening problems and guide their students about how to deal with their listening problems. Teachers can encourage their student to do more extensive listening outside the classroom in order to improve their listening skill. In addition, it would be better if students are exposed to various kinds of listening texts and activities with different accents. Students should be aware of the fact that English is a world language and they should be familiar with different accents in different pace of speech.

One of the problems that teachers mentioned was students' losing their concentration quickly and quitting listening, especially if the topic of the spoken text is not interesting for them. Teachers should explicitly inform their students that listening to a text in another language is different from listening something in their native language, it needs more effort. In addition, the activities in the materials should be adapted to make them more appealing for students that they do not stop listening.

Interview results indicated that students consider listening as a separate skill and do not realize its importance in communication and they cannot make the connection between the skills even though the school follows an integrated approach. In addition, students are not aware of the fact that listening is also important to improve their general language abilities. So, teachers should pay more attention to combine the listening skill with the other language skills to serve the real purposes of communication.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations of the present study suggesting that the findings should be treated with caution and follow-up research can be conducted to compensate the limitations of the present study. The most important limitation of the study was not being able to observe teachers' classroom practices. Since the school system follows an integrated-skills approach, it was not possible for the researcher to observe teachers' practices in the classroom. It would have been very difficult to arrange a schedule with teachers since the teachers also would have not known when they would teach/practice listening during their classes.

In terms of participants, although there are nearly 200 teachers at the school, only 49 teachers were administered the questionnaire. The study was conducted at the end of the second module. Some teachers taught B1.2 level during 1st and 2nd modules. That is why there was limited number of teachers at time of the study. In addition, the teachers who were interviewed all graduates of ELT departments.

Suggestions for Further Research

In the present study, since all the teachers interviewed were ELT graduates, interviewing with teachers from different backgrounds may reveal differences in their classroom practices. In addition, further research can include classroom observations in order to learn teachers' classroom practices and to examine whether the theory matches with their practices, after interviews.

Since only B1.2 level students were chosen to conduct this study, for further studies other levels can be included and the differences between different proficiency levels and teachers' perspectives of different levels might be investigated including more teachers in order to reach more generalizable findings. In addition, not only teachers but also the students can be interviewed in order to find out the reasons of their listening comprehension problems and how they deal with them.

Last, even though recently published course-books try to focus each skill equally, during the interviews teachers stated that the book itself is not enough to help students to overcome their listening problems such as accents. Since the course-books have limited examples, the content of the course book can be analyzed in order to investigate possible strengths and the weaknesses in terms of listening. Students' course-book can be evaluated in order to detect to what extent the book is helpful for students to overcome their listening comprehension problems.

Conclusion

This study, conducted with 423 B1.2 level students and their teachers, investigated students' and teachers' perceptions of university level students' listening comprehension problems and teachers' reported classroom practices to address those perceived problems. The results of the study revealed that in terms of students' listening comprehension problems teachers and students share different perceptions. For most of the items significant differences were identified. The results suggest that many of the items were considered more important by the teachers when compared to the students. Yet, the problems that teachers considered more important were in line with the results of other studies conducted with students in the literature (e.g., Goh, 2000; Hamouda, 2012; Hasan; 2000). The results coming from the interviews showed that, regardless of whether the teachers share the same perceptions with students or not, in terms of their classroom practices, teachers' practices were quite similar when it comes to helping their students overcome their listening comprehension problems.

Since Turkey is an EFL context, and the education system focuses more on grammar, listening is one of the skills that Turkish students have problems with even at the university level. In order to help them overcome these listening-related problems, it is important to learn the factors that affect students' listening comprehension. Since teachers are the main sources that help students deal with their listening problems, teachers' perception of the problems is also important. The way the teachers perceive the problems will affect the way they help students overcome their listening comprehension problems.

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Appendix 1 Bilgi ve Kabul Formu

Bu çalışma Bilkent Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi programında yüksek lisans yapmakta olan Selin Yıldırım tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmamın amacı öğrencilerin İngilizce derslerinde yaşadıkları dinleme problemlerini belirlemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esastadır ve elde edilen sonuçlar sadece bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek isterseniz, lütfen Selin Yıldırım (selinm@anadolu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurunuz. Çalışmaya katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

Yönerge: Aşağıdaki anket sizin yabancı dilde dinleme yaparken karşılaştığınız problemleri belirlemek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevabı yoktur. Aklınıza ilk gelen cevap sizin tutumunuzu en iyi şekilde yansıtan olacaktır. Lütfen her bir maddeyi dikkatle okuyup, yaklaşımınızı temsil eden cevabı daire içine alınız. Lütfen tüm maddeleri cevaplandırınız.

Cinsiyetiniz: E / K

Yaş:

Öğrenci No:

Daha önce hazırlık okudunuz mu? E / H

Yabancı Dilde Dinleme Yaparken Karşılaşılan Problemler Anketi

Soru No	Sorular	Asla	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Her Zaman
1	Anlaşılır şekilde telaffuz edilmeyen kelimelerin anlamlarını anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Dinleme parçasını anlamadığımda gergin ve üzgün hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Sözlü parçayı dinledikten sonra konuyla ilgili tartışma yapmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Bir dinleme parçasının başlığından konuşmacıların ne söyleyeceğini tahmin etmekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Görsel ipuçları sözlü bir pasajı anlamamda yardımcı olur (resimler, diagramlar, tablolar, video vs.)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Uzun bir dinleme parçasının anlamını yorumlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Kısa cevaptan başka türlü cevaplar gerektiren soruları cevaplamakta zorlanırım (nasıl ve neden’li sorular).	1	2	3	4	5
8	Bir dinleme parçasını kasetten dinlemektense öğretmenim okurken dinlemeyi tercih ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Birkaç kelimeyi kaçırdığım, anlamadığım zaman parçanın geri kalanına konsantre olmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5

10	Dinleme metninin konusuyla ilgili kelimeleri dinleme öncesinde tahmin etmeye çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Sözlü parçanın özetini yazmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Dinleme parçasıyla ilgili dinleme öncesi bilgileri anlamama yardımcı olur.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Dinleyeceğim parçayı önceden görmek anlamama yardımcı olur.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Dinleme esnasında tablo ya da grafik doldurmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Bilinmeyen kelimeler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Tereddütlerle ve duraksamalarla dolu olan doğal konuşmaları anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Dinleme esnasında not almakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Konuşmacılar çok hızlı konuştukları zaman iyi anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Konuşulan parçayı anlamak için konuyla ilgili tecrübelerimi ve geçmiş bilgilerimi kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Bir dinleme parçasını anlamak için çok fazla çaba sarf ederim ve bu beni yorar.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Dinlerken duyduğum kelimeleri çabucak unuturum.	1	2	3	4	5
22	İlgilimi çekmeyen dinleme parçalarını anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Kalitesiz kasetlerden kaynaklı belirsiz sesler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Dinlerken “firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand” gibi belirteçlere dikkat ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Bir dinleme parçasının genel anlamını ilk dinlemede anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Kalitesiz sınıf şartlarından kaynaklı ya da dışardan gelen sesler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Zor gramatik yapılar dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Konuşmacılar farklı şivelerle/aksanlarla konuştukları zaman iyi anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Konuşmacının vücut dilini görmeden sözlü bir pasajı anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Konuşulan parçanın ana fikrini anlamak için her detayı dinlerim.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

This study is being conducted by Selin Yıldırım, who is currently enrolled in Bilkent University MATEFL program. The aim of this study is to explore students' listening comprehension problems from the teachers' point of view. The participation in the study is completely voluntary and the answers will be used only for scientific purposes. If you would like to get further information about the study, please, get in touch with Selin Yıldırım at selinm@anadolu.edu.tr. Thanks for your participation in the study.

Name:**Signature****Background Questions:**

How long have you been teaching English? 1-5.... 6-10..... 11-15..... 16-more.....

Which department did you graduate from?

Department of English Language Teaching _____

Department of English Language and Literature _____

Department of American Culture and Literature _____

Department of Translation and Interpreting _____

Department of Linguistics _____

Teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems Part A

Dear Participant,

This part of the study aims to explore your perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems. Please consider B1.2 (intermediate) level students and list their listening comprehension problems as many as possible.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....
- 9.....
- 10.....

Appendix 3 Teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems Part B

Instruction: The questionnaire below aims to explore your perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems. There is not a correct or incorrect answer for any of the items. The first item that comes to your mind will reflect your approach best. Circle the item that represents your approach. Please answer all the items.

Listening Comprehension Problems Questionnaire

Item No	Questions	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	My students find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
2	My students feel nervous and worried when they do not understand the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
3	My students find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My students find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Visual clues help my students understand the spoken text (pictures, diagrams, charts, video, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
6	My students find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
7	My students find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions).	1	2	3	4	5
8	My students find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my reading aloud.	1	2	3	4	5
9	When my students miss a few words, they find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	1	2	3	4	5
10	My students try to predict the words that they associate with the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
11	My students find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Pre-listening information about the text improves my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Tape scripts provided before listening exercises help my students understand the text.	1	2	3	4	5
14	My students find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	1	2	3	4	5

15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My students find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	1	2	3	4	5
17	My students find it difficult to take notes while listening.	1	2	3	4	5
18	My students find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	1	2	3	4	5
19	My students use their experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
20	My students spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes them tired	1	2	3	4	5
21	My students quickly forget the words they hear while listening.	1	2	3	4	5
22	My students find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to them.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
24	My students pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.	1	2	3	4	5
25	My students find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
28	My students find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents	1	2	3	4	5
29	My students find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	1	2	3	4	5
30	My students listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 4 Interview Questions

1. How important do you think is listening skill for students?
2. How do students feel about listening activities? / How do students like listening activities?
3. What are the general listening problems that the students encounter in the classroom?
 - What do you do to solve them?
4. What do you think about the course book? Does it help students to overcome their problems?
 - Do you need to use any other extra materials?
5. Can you spend enough time for listening activities?
6. How does listening to a longer text affect students?
 - If this is a problem, what do you do to help students?
7. How does unknown vocabulary affect students' understanding of a text?
 - What do you do to help them?
8. When consider listening activities in the classroom, do students have any problems about stating their opinions after they listened to a text?
 - What do you do to help them?
9. When consider listening activities in the classroom, do students have any problems about while taking notes?
 - What do you do to help them?
10. What do you do about the problems related to different accents?
11. What do you do when students do not understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses?
12. How do they react when the topic of the listening text is uninteresting for them?
 - What do you do take their attention?
13. Do you think that students pay attention to expressions like firstly, finally, besides etc.?

 - What do you do take their attention to those expressions?

Appendix 5
SCALES OF THE ITEMS IN THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION
PROBLEMS QUESTIONNAIRE

Scale	Item No	Description
Message	6	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.
	15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.
	27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.
Task	3	I find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.
	4	I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.
	11	I find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.
	14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.
	17	I find it difficult to take notes while listening.
Speaker	1	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.
	5	Visual clues help me understand the spoken text (pictures, diagrams, and charts.)
	13	Tape scripts provided before listening exercises help me understand the text.
	16	I find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.
	18	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.
	28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.
	29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.
Listener	2	I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.
	7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions).
	8	I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud.
	9	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.
	20	I spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes me tired.
	21	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.
	22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.
	23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.
	25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.
	26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.

Strategy	10	I try to predict the words that I associate with the topic.
	12	Pre-listening information about the text improves my listening comprehension.
	19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.
	24	I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.
	30	I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.

Appendix 6: Sample Interview Transcript

R: How important do you think is listening skill for students?

T: Very important.

R: Why do you think so?

T: Listening and speaking are the main elements of communication. When we think about whole communication process each of them has % 50 importance.

R: How do students feel about listening activities? / How do students like listening activities?

T: First of all, they are prejudiced since they think they are not going to understand. They say “we are already behind, and do not know a lot”. In addition, when the accent of the speakers cause problem for them, even once, they think they will not understand rest of the text.

R: you said accent, what do you do about the problems related to different accents?

T: Honestly, I do not do anything. I tell them that it is the natural way of speaking, try to understand as much as possible, “you should get used to listen by practicing”, and that is it.

R: What are the general listening problems that the students encounter in the classroom?

T: If the text is long, they lose their concentration.

R: Is there anything that you do for longer texts?

T: Sometimes I divide them into parts. Just ask about the related parts and then listen to it again.

R: What do you think about the course book? Does it help students to overcome their problems?

T: Yes, the book is helpful especially while providing background information about the listening text. In that sense, it is pretty good.

R: Do you need to use any other extra materials?

T: No, sometimes we listen to songs, but it is just for fun.

R: Can you spend enough time for listening activities?

T: With our schools' system, I think we spend enough time. I believe there are enough number of units and listening activities.